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Fray Pedro De Gante and Early Education in New Spain

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FRAY PEDRO DE GANTE AND EARLY EDUCATION IN NEW SPAIN

BY

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PREFACE

The field of Hispanic American History offers so many new viewpoints that after one has been introduced to this branch of history he feels impelled to learn more about what was accomplished in the new world by the Spaniards before Anglo-America was settled. Catholics have reason to be proud of the work done by the Church in Hispanic America in the sixteenth century but most of us in the United States know very little of that glorious record. A school for Indians in 1523 was one of the many things that impressed me and I decided to try to learn more about the man who attempted to bring European culture to the Mexicans before the land was completely conquered. The Spaniards of the era must have felt that there was nothing unusual about erecting a school for the natives for they have left us very few available accounts of it. Because of the scarcity of data the work was a bit discouraging at times. However, Father Jacobsen was always ready to offer advice and for the encouragement and the many helpful suggestions which he made, as well as for the time and counsel which he so generously gave in the preparation of this paper I am deeply grateful.

CHAPTER I

FRAY PEDRO DE GANTE AND EARLY EDUCATION IN NEW SPAIN

European and American Background

Certain factors, environments, and persons had much to do with the advent of culture and the amenities of civilized life in North America. Among the great human factors was Pedro de Gante and his work in the New World. The conquest of Mexico, the motives and the nature of the conquerors, the attitude of Spain and the Church toward the natives, or more particularly the intentions of Charles V and the Popes with respect to the conversion and civilization of the newly found peoples, were each important elements and steps in the progress of education. The intellectual and spiritual environment in which Pedro was reared at Ghent and Louvain, the great Franciscan order of which he became a famous member, are part of the story, just as are the pagan Aztec capital of Tenochtitlán, Tezcoco, Tlascala and other cities wherein he labored at the gigantic task of implanting European culture and the Christian religion. Since these elements were each important in a greater or lesser degree some space must be devoted to them.

The accounts we have of the Spanish conquest of America emphasize the individualism, selfishness, and cruelty of the conquistadores and encomenderos. Before we condemn their actions however, we should consider the other reasons which prompted them to come to America. To understand adequately the Spanish character it would be necessary for one to review the

entire history of Iberia leading to the conditions in Spain in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Suffice it to say that the motives which prompted the conquistadores to leave Spain and to go among the warlike and primitive peoples of the western world could be classified under three large headings, namely, greed, God and glory. The motives varied with the individuals and as their motives differed so also did their methods of accomplishing them.

When Columbus returned to Spain and reported his findings, some persons from various walks of life, as was to be expected, were willing to face the hazards of the Atlantic in order to obtain a portion of the wealth of the new land. Most of them were adventurers ready to use any method to obtain the coveted gold. The Crusades and the wars against the Moors had developed a religious zeal which made the soldiers of the crown anxious to march forth and conquer the heathen natives of the newcountry. All those classified as men in the quest for glory might be divided into three distinct groups, one seeking glory for self, another glory for the king, and the other seeking glory for God. In the last named group belong principally the missionaries - those men who came solely to conquer souls and armed only with the crucifix. No history of New Spain is complete which omits an account of the work of these pioneer bishops, priests, lay brothers and religious women.

All of the Spaniards, even the most brutal of the conquistadores, felt that they were obliged to bring the light of faith to the natives of the New World. Because people of today cannot understand the crusading spirit of the Spaniards of that day and the value which was placed upon the soul, they have missed the animating force of Spanish achievement in the Americas.[1] Lowery

[1] John Bartlett Brebner, The Explorers of North America, 1492-1806. (Macmillan Co. New York, 1933) pp. 44-45.

in describing the character of the conquistador says:-

> Born in a rugged and mountainous country and bred on the field of battle, he was hardy, abstemious, and independent. In conflict with a daring and generous adversary, he had become brave and chivalrous, imbibing, in the knightly exploits which had especially distinguished the last war, a passionate and consuming love of adventure.... The experience of war, persecution, and harsh criminal codes had hardened his sensibilities to the sight of suffering and had given him a contempt for human life. And yet he was essentially a religious man, and the strength and sternness of his convictions, blending with the training of centuries, which had developed to its fullest extent every soldierly quality in his nature, fitted him for the divine mission, for which, like another chosen people, had had felt himself to be singled out, that of the Christian crusader fighting against unbelief.[2]

In order to appreciate fully the work done by the Spaniards, we must keep in mind that crusading spirit.

When the Spaniards first came to the Americas, the natives with whom they came in contact were in such a primitive and almost animal state that, as Professor Hanke points out in his recent monograph, a question arose as to whether or not they were human beings.[3] The question was a difficult one, and in order to settle the matter, three priests belonging to the Hieronymite Order were selected to go to Española to make a study, and to report their findings. This group was known as the Hieronymite Commission. After much deliberation, it was decided that the natives were human beings with immortal souls and that they should be free. Since the indigenes by this decision and succeeding legislation were now Spanish subjects,the Spaniards realized that the obligation of saving the souls of the conquered peoples rested with them.

[2] Woodbury Lowery, The Spanish Settlements Within the Present Limits of the United States, 1513-1561. (G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1901) pp.98-99.

[3] Lewis Hanke, The First Social Experiments in America. (Harvard University Press, 1935) p.4.

The king decided that the Indians should be induced to accept Christianity by the methods Christ had established.[4] This meant that there was to be instruction at least in religion, and instruction in religion meant training in the fundamental concepts of western civilization, and hence religious instruction was the first step toward the elevation of the native races out of the semi-barbarism into which they had fallen.

After the Conquest and the establishment of European institutions on the islands had been completed, Cortés succeeded in conquering a portion of the mainland. He, too, regarded his work as a crusade against the unbeliever. Pedro de Gante writing to King Philip II, in 1558, of the motives of the great conqueror reveals the program that Cortés inaugurated, saying that the friars were enjoined by him to carry on a crusade of Christianization and Educoation "and this according to the instruction of the Captain who was then Hernando Cortés surely of grateful memory, who was then (1524) the whole reason why the gospel of God was held in reverence, honoring its ministers and holding them in high esteem."[5] Merriman says that Cortés like all true Spaniards, "zealous for the advancement of the faith, determined to effect the subjugation of the Indians and get possession of their treasures, he shrank from no means to accomplish these ends; yet there are few instances in his whole career in which he was cruel or blood-thirsty without a purpose."[6]

4 Hanke, op.cit., p.44. Rev. Francis Borgia Steck,O.F.M. The First Half-Century of Spanish Dominion in Mexico. (Central Bureau Press, St.Louis, Missouri,1935) Footnote on p.11 states:"(1)the controversy was not taken very seriously ... (2) the question seems not to have been whether the Indians were human beings; but whether ... they are incapable of the Catholic faith."

5.Joaquín García Icazbalceta, editor Codice Franciscano Siglo XVI published as as Vol.II. Nueva Coleccion de Documentos para la Historia de México. Mexico 1889. Letter of Fray Pedro de Gante to the King Don Philip II. pp.220-227, p.220.

6 Roger Bigelow Merriman, The Rise of the Spanish Empire in the Old World and in the New. (4 vols., (Macmillan Co., New York,1925), III, p.460.

He had priests with him on all his expeditions, for he realized that their presence proved a stimulus to the soldiers during the hardships of a march or the dangers of a battle[7] and moreover they were necessary for administering the sacraments. There were five ecclesiastics present during the siege of Tenochtitlán, the present Mexico City, Fathers Olmedo, Juan Díaz, Juan de Leon, Juan Díaz de Guervara, and the Franciscan Pedro Melgarejo Díaz.[8]

The story of the Conquest of Mexico is one small portion of Spain's work in America that is well known. Yet Brebner feels that this great story should be read from the accounts left by eye witnesses. He thinks that if we read these accounts written by the soldiers we will readily understand,

> ...that the conquest was no ruthless massacre of almost helpless primitives, but a not unequal contest between a military genius with a few ambitious followers and a professionally trained empire which was robbed at the crucial moment of the good leadership which was its only need, at least temporarily, to hold its own. Cortés won because he exploited not only every known and half-known element of the Spaniard's inherent prestige, but as well every fissure and weakness in his opponents...[9]

This strong-arm or physical conquest was but the first step toward the religious and later cultural conquest of the Americas.

When Cortés had obtained possession of the Aztec stronghold, he decided that the priests and not the soldiers were the proper persons to rescue the natives from paganism. Early in 1521 he wrote to the Pope and to the Emperor entreating them to send members of religious orders as missionaries to the New World. His letter to the Emperor, Charles V, read in part:-

7. Hubert H. Bancroft, History of Mexico. (6 vols., A.L.Bancroft & Co., San Francisco, 1883), II, p.157.
8. Herbert Ingram Priestley, The Mexican Nation, A History (The Macmillan Company, 1923) p.97.
9. Brebner, op.cit.,pp.43-44.

> Send, your majesty, to this land, many devout monks who are zealous for the conversion of the Indians. Let these build monasteries and let the tithes be paid them for their upkeep and the support of their work, and what is left over, let it be used for churches and ornaments in the cities where the Spaniards live.[10]

Cortés emphasized the point that the natives seemed anxious to become Christians, and he expressed a preference for the Franciscan missionaries to work among them.[11] He felt that the friars would, by their example, convince the Indians that they were not interested in the gold of the natives, but only in the salvation of their souls,[12] and in bringing to a hopelessly enslaved and pagan land, the philosophy of Christian life.

Emperor Charles V of Spain (1500-1556) was the grandson of Ferdinand and Isabella and also of Maximillian I. He had inherited Spain from his mother, the Netherlands from his father, the Hapsburg possessions in Germany from his grandfather Maximillian I, and by election he became Holy Roman Emperor.[13] Consequently, although very young when he ascended the throne, he was the most powerful prince of the known world. He was only sixteen, when, upon the death of Ferdinand in 1516, he succeeded to the Spanish throne,[14] but was serious about his duty of protecting and spreading Catholicity. He had lived in Flanders all his life and upon his first visit to Spain he could not speak Spanish. Because of this he made a very poor impression upon his

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10 Letters of Cortés, 2 vols., translated by Francis Augustus MacNutt (G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1908), II, p.214.

11 Rev. Joseph A. Griffin, The Contribution of Belgium to the Catholic Church in America (The Catholic University of America, Washington,D.C. 1932), p.2

12 Father Zephryn Engelhardt,O.F.M., The Missions and Missionaries of California. (4 vols., The James H. Barry Co., San Francisco, 1908) I, p.12

13 Leon Van Der Essen, A Short History of Belgium. (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1920) pp.93-95.

14 Charles E. Chapman, A History of Spain. (The Macmillan Co., 1925)p.237.

Spanish subjects.[15] His first years in Spain were not happy ones for the young king, due to his not understanding the Spanish character. By 1522 he had changed considerably and was beginning to appreciate the Spaniards and their point of view.[16]

The letters of Cortés arriving during his first years as Emperor roused this grandson of the "Catholic Kings" to his duty toward his subjects in New Spain, and he appealed to the various religious orders for volunteer preachers to go to the New World.[17] In his request he stressed the necessity of sending only men well educated, and of outstanding character. There were many volunteers but only a few could meet the rigid requirements.[18]

Early in 1522, Cardinal Adrian of Utrecht, who had acted as Charles' representative and governor in Spain while Charles was in Germany in 1520 and 1521[19] was elected Pope, to succeed Leo X. Having spent some time in Spain he was interested in New Spain and caused more energetic measures to be taken by the Church toward the new land.[20] On May 15,1522 he issued a Bull which authorized all mendicant friars designated by their superiors, to undertake the conversion of the natives of New Spain. He, too, stressed the point that only those fitted by their knowledge and their exemplary life should be permitted to go. The prelates of the Orders were to delegate to these missionaries all the powers needed for the conversion of the natives and the maintenance of the faith in the Indies, including as Bancroft states, "the exercise of such episcopal acts as did not actually require the prerogative of a con-

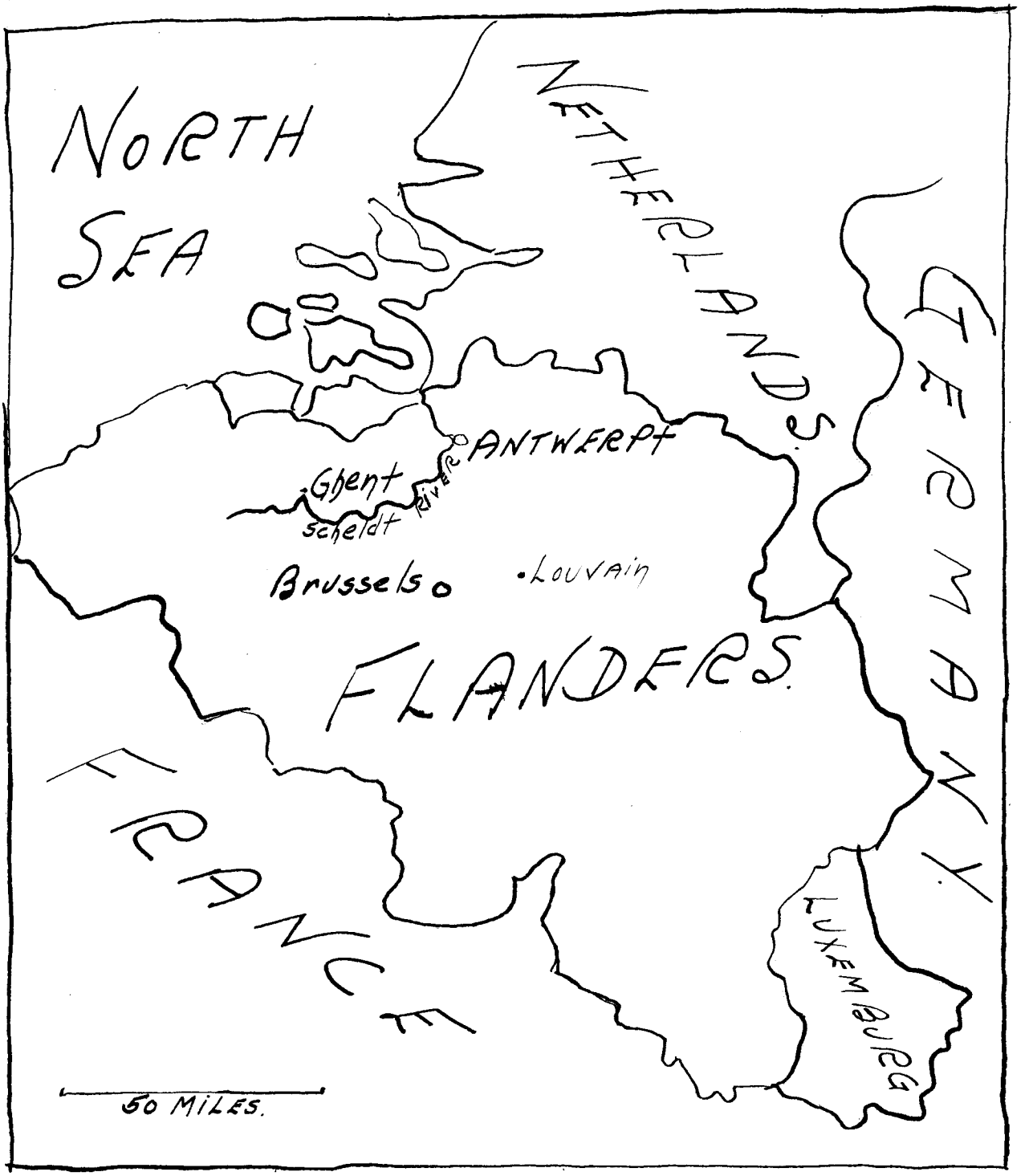
15 Merriman, op.cit., III, p.31.
16 Ibid., p.61.
17 Engelhardt, Missions and Missionaries. I, p.12.
18 Griffin, op.cit., p.2.
19 Merriman, op.cit., III, p.228.
20 Bancroft, History of Mexico, II, p.160.

secrated bishop, in places where no such prelate existed, or in places lying a greater distance from the bishop's abode than two days journey."[21] Pastor says: "In order to promote the missionary activity of the Franciscans in America, the Pope conferred upon the Order in that continent extensive privileges: they were to elect their own superior every three years, to possess the full powers of the Minister-General, and even to exercise episcopal functions, except those of ordination."[22]

The Flemings were particularly interested because of a plan to transfer Cordoba's discoveries to an Admiral of Flanders.[23] When permission was given to Franciscans generally to engage in the conversion of the New World, three Flemish friars volunteered and were accepted.[24] The three were Juan de Tecto, superior of the friary at Ghent, who had been the Emperor's Confessor, Juan de Aora, and Pedro de Gante. Pedro was only a lay brother but he was a man of talent and exemplary life, familiar with the prevalent education in Europe, who had acquired great respect and influence in Flanders[25] and who was destined to accomplish great things in America. It is principally Pedro's work in New Spain that will concern us here.

21. Bancroft, op.cit., II, p.160.
22 Dr. Ludwig Pastor, The History of the Popes from the Close of the Middle Ages, Edited by F.I. Antrobus and R.F. Kerr. (14 vols. B. Herder Book Co., St. Louis, Missouri, 1898-1923), Third Edition IX, p.153.
23 Bancroft, History of Mexico, II, p.161.
24 Fray Gerónimo de Mendieta, O.F.M., Historia Eclesiástica Indiana. Obra Escrita á Fines del Siglo XVI (Published in Mexico, 1870) p.608.
25 Mendieta, loc. cit.

FLANDERS.


NORTH SEA
NETHERLANDS
GERMANY
ANTWERPT
Ghent
River Scheldt
Brussels
Louvain
FLANDERS
FRANCE
LUXEMBURG
50 MILES.

CHAPTER II

THE EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENT OF PEDRO DE GANTE

Little is known of the parents or of the early life of Pedro de Gante. His proper name was Pierre de Mura, or in Flemish, Peter Van de Moere. Most historians are agreed that he was of noble blood. Some list him as a relative of the Emperor Charles V, apparently because both were born in Ghent. Just what the relationship was is not very clear. Prescott asserts that Gante was the son of Charles V. But since Pedro was born in 1479 and Charles in 1500, this statement is ridiculous. Bancroft thinks Pedro was a brother of the Emperor.[1] But this is just as absurd since Pedro was the same age as the Emperor's father, Philip the Fair. Another opinion, advanced by Ixtlilxochitl the Mexican Indian historian, is that he was a cousin of Charles.[2] The basis for the conjecture that he was of noble lineage, seems to be the esteem in which he was held by Charles V.[3] Mendieta wrote that Charles V knew well the type of man Pedro was and the life which he led, and greatly appreciated him.[4] Whatever the reason for the esteem and friendship existing between the Emperor and Pedro many documents indicate that Charles V always heeded Pedro's pleadings.[5] Records show too, that at least one other person of his era was known as Pedro de Gante.[6]

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1 Bancroft, History of Mexico,II. footnote, p.161.

2 Griffin, op.cit., in a footnote on p.3 refers to Kieckens, "Les Ancient Missionaries Belges en Amerique" Precis Historiques,IX, 1880, for a discussion of the relationship. P.Mariano Cuevas,S.J., Historia de la Iglesia en México (5 vols. Editorial Revista Catholica, El Paso,Texas,1928), I p.162 also discusses it.

3 Annales Minorum (27 vols. edited by an Historical Commission of Franciscans Clara Agua Press, Florence, Italy, 1933) XVIII, p.467 ... "Jodocum Richium ...deinde Petrum Gandavensen Jodoci comitem, quos Carlos V Caesar familiter

In the following letter, which is often quoted, written in the Convent of San Francisco in Mexico, June 27, 1529, to his brothers in Flanders, Fray Pedro says:-

> I want you to know my dearsthat I left Ghent, a city of Flanders, with two friars my companions, one Fray Juan de Tecto and the other Fray Juan de Aora and I Fray Pedro de Mura born in the city of Iguen in the Budarda Province, was the third. We left together from Ghent in April 1522 on the octave of Easter and arrived in Spain on July 22. We sailed anew from there for the last time on May 1,1523 and arrived at Villenque (Villa Rica) on August 13 and from there we went to Mexico, peopled already by Christians. From there I went to another province whose name is Tezcoco in which I lived for three and a half years ....I want some one of you to translate this letter into Netherlandish or German and forward it to my relatives that they may know something good from us, at least that I am alive and well .... I could write much about this country had I not forgotten my native language...[7]

While the letter was addressed to his brothers, he undoubtedly had reference to his spiritual brothers, the members of the Franciscan Order. In 1552 he wrote to Charles V saying: "Je suis né dans la ville de Gand."[8] If he were a relative of the Emperor it is not likely that he would be so unknown to the latter that he would have to have informed him thus. Iguen was a town on the outskirts of Ghent and now a part of the city, so from his own statements it seems safe to state that he was born in Ghent in 1479.

3 (cont. from p.12) coluit, morumque inocentia et suavitate permotus, idoneus censuit qui ad agendam religionis causam in Americam mitterentur."

4 (cont. from p.12) Mendieta, op.cit., p.609.

5 (" " p.12) Francisco Xavier Alegre, Historia de la Compañía de Jesús en Nueva España (Mexico, 1841, 3 vols). I., p.180. States that Pedro was much more recommendable for his singular piety than for the illustrious blood of the kings of Scotia and his immediate relationship with the Emperor Charles V.

6 Petrus a Gandavo, Relaciones de Pedro de Gante secretario del duque de Nájera (1520-1544) Edited by Pascual de Gayangos, (Madrid, 1873). The author of this book was the secretary of the third duke of Nájera, Don Juan Esteban Manrique de Lara; was a contemporary of Fray Pedro, and a friend of Charles V, but there is nothing to indicate the two Pedros were related. The secretary was called Pedro de Gante because he led an expedition to Flanders.

Pedro de Gante spent his early life in the cultural atmosphere of Ghent, then went to Louvain for his university training. It is important to note this university background of Pedro, because it most probably inspired the ideals of education, religion, charity, and self-sacrifice which he carried to the New World. Pedro became the link between the great educational past of Louvain and the beginning of American Education.

Ghent during the fifteenth century was probably the most important city in northern Europe. It is located at the juncture of the Lys and the Scheldt Rivers and ships from all parts of the world brought merchandise to its docks. The people were thrifty, industrious, and cultured. Pedro as an heir to these civic traits later on was to try, with considerable success, to implant them in the Mexican Indians. This Flemish or Netherlandish background of the development of crafts and industries in America has not been sufficiently emphasized. Many beautiful churches and public buildings lined the spacious streets of Ghent. The town was a republic in all but name.[9] It had been one of the centers of the woolen industry, receiving the raw wool from England. During the hundred years war, Flanders had sided with France against England. That political alinement led to her economic decay.[10] Ghent experienced a period of decline, but due to its grain staple and the introduction of the linen industry was again, at the close of the fifteenth century, the most opulent city in northern Europe.[11]

7 (cont. from p.13) Cuevas, op.cit., I, pp.159-160.

8 Griffin, op.cit., p.2

9 John Lathrop Motley, The Rise of the Dutch Republic (3 vols., E.P.Dutton & Co., New York, April, 1920) I, pp.62-63.

10 Edward Neville Vose, The Spell of Flanders (The Page Co., Boston, 1915), pp.198-199. Edward III of England prohibited the exportation of wool to Flanders and the sale of Flemish woolens in England. As a result Flanders had to import wool from Spain which was of an inferior grade to the English woll and the Flemish woolen industry began to decline.

11 Amedée Forester and George Omond, Brabrant and East Flanders (A.& C.Black, London, 1908), p.13

Louvain, too, had been a great woolen center and when that business declined had no industry to replace it. The citizens were reduced to poverty and many were forced to emigrate to England where the woolen business was flourishing. To compensate the city for its industrial loss the University of Louvain was founded.[12] Adrian of Utrecht entered this University in 1476 and at that time the school of theology enjoyed a high reputation.[13] By the end of the century, in Ganto's time, Louvain was perhaps the most famous place of education in Europe.[14]

During the Middle Ages a student usually entered the University between the ages of thirteen and sixteen. All lectures were given in Latin, consequently he had to read, write and understand Latin before becoming a university student.[15] As early as 1441, Louvain had established a system of competitive honors which Rashdall describes in the following manner:-

> The candidates for the Mastership were after examination placed in three classes, in each of which the names were arranged in order of merit. The first class were styled Rigorosi (Honour-men), the second Transibiles (Pass-men), the third Gratiosi (Charity-passed), while a fourth class, not publicly announced, contained the names of those who could not be passed, on any terms. These competitive examinations contributed largely to raise Louvain to the high position as a place of learning and education which it obtained before the universities elsewhere were roused from their fifteenth-century torpor by the revival of learning. Pope Adrian VI and (at a later date) Jansen were among the many celebrated men who attained the position of Primus in the Louvain examinations.[16]

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13 Hastings Rashdall. The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages. (2 vols.,The Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1895) II, p.260. The University of Louvain was opened in 1426.

14 Ibid., p 261.

15 Ibid., p 604.

16 Ibid., pp.262-263.

12 Essen, op.cit., p.75.

In Mexico City Pedro de Gante classified student mentality along the very same lines. The University tended to stimulate a desire for learning and the Arts flourished in Flanders. The Flemish language began to replace French and the distinction began to be made between the Dutch, Flemish, and Netherlandish tongues; the writers of the period wrote in Flemish and the Flemish literature developed rapidly. The great school of Flemish artists was famous during this era. To it belonged such masters as Jan and Hubert Van Eyck and Roger de la Pasture or Van der Weyden.[17] In music the Flemish masters Jan Ockeghem and Josquin des Prés substituted the choir with many voices for the choir with one voice.[18] The public buildings of Flanders of the fifteenth century are excellent examples of the high place the Flemings had attained in the fields of architecture and sculpture. This culture and prosperity came to the Netherlands under the rule of the Dukes of Burgundy. The last of them, Charles the Bold, died on the battlefield of Nancy in 1477, and his daughter, Mary of Burgundy succeeded him. She was not able to cope with the political situation brought about by the death of her father. French and Germans coveted Burgundy and the Burgundian statesmen decided Mary should marry to save her possessions, and that she should marry Maximillian of Hapsburg. This marriage laid the foundation for the European supremacy of the House of Hapsburg. A son, known in history as Philip the Fair, was born in 1478. From him Charles V inherited the Netherlands, and Flanders thus became Spanish territory.[19] Pedro de Gante was born in Flanders about the time it became part of the Spanish possessions.

17 Essen, op.cit., pp.89-90.
18 Ibid., p.91.
19 Ibid., pp.92-93.

Not much is known of Pedro's early life, nor of the years spent at Louvain. From what has been written above and from what he later accomplished in Mexico a guess as to his training and ideals may be hazarded. Thrifty, and industrious, acquainted with the arts, music, painting and sculpture, a diplomat trained in one of the greatest courts in Europe, his outstanding virtue seems to be his religious fervor. After leaving the University he served at the Courts of Philip the Fair and Charles V where he frequently met two eminent Franciscans, Fathers Juan Glampion and Juan de Tecto.[20] The exemplary life of these men so impressed Pedro that he decided to become a member of their Order.[21] His association with the Franciscans added to his characteristics a supernatural outlook and gave him new motives and a life work and led to a glorious achievement among the Aztec idolaters.

The Franciscan Order, or Order of Friars Minor, as it is officially known, was founded by Francis of Assisi in 1209. Francis was the son of a wealthy merchant, who tiring of a life of luxury, sold all his possessions and retired to a secluded spot in the hills near his native town. For a time he lived the life of a hermit, spending his time in prayer and meditation. He begged his daily bread from the people of the town. After a time he decided to preach the word of God to these fellow-townsmen. At first his old friends scoffed at him, but later his earnestness convinced them he was not

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20 Fray Pedro in his aforementioned letter of 1558 to Philip II says ... since I was very young I have occupied myself always in things pertaining to the service of the Royal Crown before my conversion and afterwards here very much more. For better evidence of this I will give your majesty a statement ... of the success in this land of a man tried by experience very wide and over very many years .... Concerning these affairs as your Majesty is so far away and cannot see them nor can your royal presence be had ... we religious deem it necessary and desirous that the spiritual should endure ... in order that as the Emperor our Lord has done, your Majesty with equal, most Christian zeal for souls likewise and as a son of such a father, King and Senîr our Lord may do." Icazbalceta, Codice

insane as they had assumed. He became the most loved of the saints for his gentleness, and is admired greatly even in Protestant circles. The contemplative life appealed to thirteenth century Europeans and Francis soon had numerous followers. It became necessary to draw up rules to govern this fast-growing religious community.

The distinguishing characteristic of this group was its absolute poverty. Neither the members as individuals nor the Order as a group could hold any property. The friars were to depend solely upon the charity of the faithful for their sustenance. They were to imitate the life of Christ and to work for the welfare of the Church. The Order spread rapidly throughout Europe. Its members were found in all fields. They were preachers, teachers, musicians, scientists, scribes, historians, travelers, poets, artists and statesmen.[22] To follow the rule of Francis required fortitude and developed humility. Because of these traits the followers of the Poor man of Assisi were generally loved and esteemed by those around them. Pedro joined this body of religious and his years of training in the ascetic life are blank pages in his biography, but incidentally Gante developed many of the lovable characteristics of his model and father.

One biographer, who as a priest knew the lay brother, tells us that Pedro de Gante from early youth possessed great humility.[23] It is not surprising then that the Franciscan Order appealed to him. When he renounced the world, he decided to enter the order as a lay brother. He was serving in this capacity in the convent at Ghent when the call for workers in the New

20 (cont. from p.17) Francisoano, p.220.
21 (" " ") Griffin, op.cit., p.3
22 Michael Bihl in Catholic Encyclopedia (15 vols., Robert Appleton Co., New York, 1909) VI, pp.283-295.
23 Mendieta, op.cit., p.608.

World was received in Europe. Charles V was in Flanders at the time and when he departed for Spain on April 27, 1522, the three Flemings mentioned above accompanied him. Gante, in his letter of 1558 says that he first received news of Cortés after he had reached Santander, Spain[24] and hence probably Charles wanted them to go to the Islands. Steck states that Charles V "set out for Spain, accompanied by the three Flemish Franciscans, who had been duly authorized by their provincial superior to join Cortés in Mexico and begin missionary work among its natives."[25] They reached Santander on July 22, 1522. For the next few months the Flemings busied themselves studying the Spanish language. Many writers assume that they remained in Spain waiting for papal sanction to go to New Spain.[26] Yet according to the agreement between the Pope and the Spanish Crown known as the Patronato Real, the Spanish King controlled the appointment and departure of churchmen for the New World and his permission was all that was necessary for missionaries to work in New Spain.[27]

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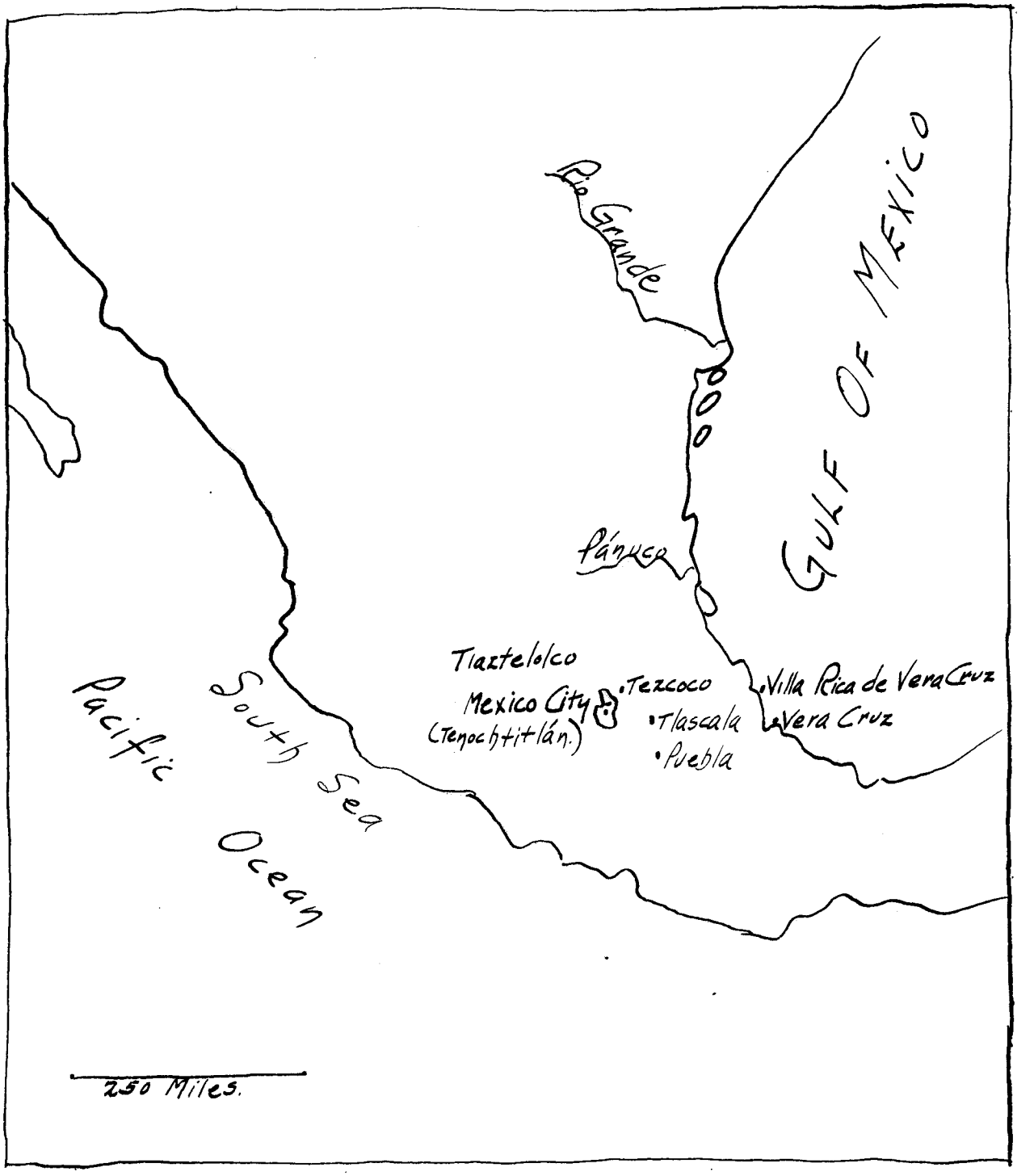
24 Icazbalceta, Codice Franciscano, p.221.

25 Steck, The First Half-Century of Spanish Dominion in Mexico, p.5

26 Bancroft, History of Mexico, II. footnote p.162; Steck, loc. cit., Lota M. Spell, "The First Teacher of European Music in America," in The Catholic Historical Review, New Series II, (Washington, 1922) pp.372-378, p.373, all mention that the Flemings did not have papal authorization for their departure for New Spain.

27 Hanke, op. cit., p.10 ... "the bulls of donation of Pope Alexander VI and Pope Julius II conferred upon the Crown of Spain the power to direct church as well as state affairs in the new found world."

General View of Mexico in Gante's Time.



CHAPTER III

ENVIRONMENT AND ESTABLISHMENT IN NEW SPAIN

The Flemings left Seville for New Spain on May 1, 1523 and landed at Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz, a town about thirty miles north of the present city of Vera Cruz, on August 13. From VillaRica they went to Mexico City, where they had intended to work among the natives.[1]

Perhaps their departure from Spain had been delayed because the Spanish Franciscans did not want them to be the first group of missionaries to land in New Spain. Were they very unwilling to accord that honor to the northerners? Spell mentions that the names of the Flemings are not listed with the group known as "the twelve Apostles" of the Franciscans.[2] But the Flemings were in New Spain almost a year before the twelve first Franciscans arrived. Bancroft uses a quotation from Mendieta to explain the omission of their names. The following is his explanation: "Coming solely with the permit of their provincials, 'no con autoridad apostolica ... ni con mandato del ministro general,' they cannot be recognized as the first Franciscans in New Spain."[3] To say they were not the first ones because they did not have papal sanction is preposterous. They were members of the Franciscan Order and they preceded the "famous twelve" by almost a year. Consequently they would have a better claim to being the first Franciscans in New Spain than would the twelve who followed. But, according to Father Engelhardt, the first Franciscan in Mexico apparently was Pedro Melgarejo, who had been with Cortes

1 Griffin, op.cit., p.4
2 Spell, op.cit., p.373.
3 Bancroft, History of Mexico. II, footnote p.161 from Mendieta, Historia Eclesiástica, p.215.

during the siege of Tenochtitlan in 1521. He had returned to Spain in 1522 to defend Cortés at Court.[4] Evidently, as most people would deduce, the Flemings were not the first because another had been there before them and not because they came without papal sanction.

In another account, in speaking of the arrival of the Flemings in New Spain, Father Engelhardt says, "they were the first religious to preach Christianity among the natives of Mexico."[5] By that he undoubtedly meant that they were the first to devote their attention entirely to the natives. There had been priests on all the expeditions to the New World, but according to Engelhardt, the secular priests were concerned chiefly with the spiritual wants of the Spaniards.[6]

Mexico City, at which the Flemings arrived, was until 1521, the capital of the so-called Aztec Empire. Originally the site was two reed-covered mud banks or islands, in a great salt lake.[7] The space between them was eventually filled in until, at the time of the Conquest, only a rather wide canal separated them. The northern island was known as Tlatelolco and the one to the south Tenochtitlan.[8] Tenochtitlán was the largest city of the Empire and at the time Cortes first approached its shores was a city of between sixty and seventy thousand homes. These houses were made of adobe covered with white plaster. The city was separated from the mainland on all sides by a

4 Father Zephryin Engelhardt,O.F.M. in Catholic Encyclopedia, VI, p.299.
5 Engelhardt, The Missions and Missionaries of California, I, p.12.
6 Engelhardt, Catholic Encyclopedia, VI, p.299.
7 Peter Martyr D'Anghera, De Orbe Nove translated by Francis Augustus McNutt, (2 vols., G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1912), II, p.86.
8 Bernal Díaz Castille, The True History of the Conquest of NewSpain, 5 vols., translated by Alfred Percival Maudslay, In Works Issued by the Hakluyt Society. Second Series No. XXIII (London, 1908), II, p.46.

distance of from one to two leagues. It was built in the form of a square and was protected by high walls which rose about nine feet above the water's edge. Above these walls could be seen the many beautiful temples erected to the various gods of the Aztecs. The mainland was reached by stone causeways, and an aqueduct leading from the mainland supplied the city with drinking water. There was a large market place in the center of the town to which products were brought from the mainland on barques. The cocoa bean was used for money.[9] The city had excited the admiration of the Spaniards, but the native custom of offering human sacrifices to their gods was so abhorrent that Cortés had ordered their temples destroyed.[10] When the Flemings arrived, late in August 1523, conditions were in such an unsettled state as a result of these orders that it was decided they should go to Tezcoco. Tenochtitlán was being destroyed and Mexico City was being built on its site and mingled with the din of the workers was the noise of considerable strife among the conquerors.

Fray Pedro in his letter of 1429, stated that when he arrived in Mexico City in 1523, it already had a Christian population of Spaniards. Bancroft advances the opinion that the Flemings went on to Tezcoco because none of them spoke Spanish well enough to work among the Spanish congregations at the capital. The Spaniards looked upon the Flemings as "intrusive foreigners," and the Flemings were not anxious to irritate them.[11]

9 Letters of Cortés, pp.256-258.
10Brebner, op.cit., p.43
11Bancroft, History of Mexico, II, p.168; Cuevas, op.cit., p.262.

The natives of Tezcoco were allies of the Spaniards. They had been subjects of Montezuma but had rebelled against him and were unfriendly to him at the time of the arrival of Cortés.[12] They welcomed the opportunity which Cortés offered them of joining forces against Montezuma. Because Cortés felt the missionaries would be well received by the Tezcocans he sent them there.[13] They were lodged at the palace of Ixtlixochitl, where they remained as guests for nine months.[14] The chief, who was not so sure his subjects would receive the friars kindly, asked them not to appear in public for fear their presence would cause a disturbance among the Indians.[15] His fears were unfounded for the friars were well received by the natives and in a short time Gante had mastered the Aztec language sufficiently to open a school for the sons of the chiefs in a building placed at his disposal by Ixtlixochitl.[16]

In visualizing the Tezcoco to which Gante went in 1523, it is well to remember that it was not a wilderness. It was situated on the northeastern shores of Lake Tezcoco, a few miles across the lake from Mexico City. Cortes in a letter to Charles V, described it as being six leagues by canoe and ten by land from Tenochtitlán. He stated there were about thirty thousand households in the city, as well as some very large and well-built mosques and oratories and extensive market places.[17] Tezcoco had been the capitalof the

12 Peter Martyr, II, p.103.

13 Annales Minorum, XVI, p.160, the statement is made that Gante and his companions stayed at Tlaxcala until 1523, rather than at Tezcoco. This citation in the Annales is taken from Herrera, Dec. 3, lib.2, c.9, and from Turrecremata (Torquemada) Monarquia Indiana. Lib.II, c.19. Mendieta, op. cit., says they went first to Tezcoco and this seems to be the accepted view

14 Ezequiel A. Chávez, El Primero de los Grandes Educadoes de la America, Fray Pedro de Gante. (Mexico, 1934), p.13.

15 Francis Clement Kelley, Blood-Drenched Altars (Bruce Publishing Co., Milwaukee, 1935) p.393.

16 Spell, op.cit., p.374.

17. Letters of Cortes, I, pp.247-248.

Acolhuacan kingdom.[18] These Acolhuas were the original dominators of the territory and at the time of the Conquest were one of the three tribes in the Aztec Confederacy.[19] Their capital was older than Tenochtitlán and rivalled it in size and importance. It had been the center of Nahua culture and retained its cultural ascendancy until the Spanish Conquest. It has been described as the "Athens of the Aztecs."[20]

The beauty of this city on the inland sea made such an impression on the Spaniards that many descriptions of it were sent to Spain. These accounts told of the white houses surrounded by beautiful gardens. The walls of the houses were washed with white bitumen and from a distance gave the appearance of little huts covered with snow.[21] The dominating building was a lofty temple, reached by ascending one hundred seventeen steps.[22] Here as in Mexico, the Indians offered human victims as sacrifices on their altars. From events which followed, we may assume that when Fray Pedro beheld this heathen temple, he determined to do all in his power to replace it with a Christian place of worship.

The practice of offering human sacrifices to the gods was abhorrent to many of the natives, especially the weaker tribes of the neighborhood,[23] for it was customary for the Aztecs to select their victims from these conquered peoples. The Aztecs were feared and hated by their neighbors and perhaps, as some writers contend, the animosity of these tribes toward the

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18. Letters of Cortés, I, pp.247-248. footnote.
19. Priestley, op.cit., p.22
20. Letters of Cortés, I.
21. Peter Martyr, op.cit., p.353.
22. Bernal Díaz, op.cit., II, p.83.
23. Priestley, op.cit., p.29.

the Aztecs, simplified the Spanish Conquest of New Spain. Enemies of Spain denounce her for having permitted the destruction of Aztec civilization, but most scholars who have made a study of it, admit it was but a barbarian culture. One author says:

> There are two schools of thought regarding the character of the institutions developed by the Aztecs. Lewis H. Morgan and A.F. Bandelier leaned to the opinion that the words "empire," "lord," "king," employed freely by the Spanish writers from Cortés down and followed by William H. Prescott, are misconceptions of social and political development among the Mexicans. They argue that Cortés himself steeped in imperial phraseology and conceptions, used familiar descriptive terms in reporting to his emperor a new life of which he had inadequate understanding .... In reality, think these writers, the Aztec "empire" was a loosely bound confederacy of democratic Indian tribes. This opinion is adhered to by John Fiske and by manyleading American ethnologists. Most other writers incline to the idea that the Aztecs and like tribes had real monarchical institutions. ... As a matter of fact Mexico was governed by a priestley oligarchy, and had a normal tribal organization below it.[24]

Another writer contends that the Aztec priesthood held the people in a grip of iron, and in other respects, their culture presented strange contrasts between enlightenment and barbarism.[25]

Priestley feels that, "there were two groups of native culture which may be roughly classified as savage and barbarian, respectively. There were all grades of savagery, while the barbarian cultures partook, in many respects, of the traditionally accepted characteristics of genuine civilization.[26] This last point is one that is overlooked by the casual writer, who

24 Priestley, op.cit., pp.24-25.
25 Merriman, op.cit., III, p.469.
26 Priestley, op.cit., p.26.

condemns Spain for destroying the native civilization. Students of primitive American life concede that the Aztecs had reached their zenith before the arrival of the Spaniards and that it would have been only a matter of time until the surrounding tribes would have overthrown them.[27] Others take the stand that Spain destroyed a great civilization. One writer says:

> They had their own literature most of which was destroyed by the Spaniards. They used picture-writings and much of their traditional and scientific lore was committed to manuscripts .... It was part of the religious fanaticism of the Spaniards that they wished to destroy all the records and symbols of the pagan race they had conquered.[28]

On the other hand, Icazbalceta argues that

> If the Aztecs, during the years immediately preceding the Spanish Conquest, had attained so high a degree of culture, it is totally incomprehensivle that not a single individual remained to preserve that intellectual culture, and to give, through the medium of writing, which the Spaniards had brought to Mexico, an account of it. Though Indian annalists or Chroniclers were not wanting among the Aztecs, we do not know of any philosophers, orators, or poets who came from these ancient academies. If these schools actually existed, and, if they produced philosophers, orators and poets, it is impossible to believe that both the schools and the pupils disappeared at the death of the founders of these schools.[29]

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27 Letters of Cortés, op.cit., II, Appendix p.154.
28 Frank C. Carpenter, Mexico, (Doubleday Page and Co., New York, 1925), p.135
29 Joaquín García Icazbalceta, "Education in the City of Mexico in the Sixteenth Century," in Historical Records and Studies, XX (1931) translated by Walter O'Donnell, C.S.C., pp.99-157, p.100.

there was no system of education for the masses. Any intellectual attainments which the Aztecs possessed were limited to a few individuals.[30] Their religion was gruesome and their whole social life was brutal and debased.[31]

30 Icazbalceta, loc. cit.
31 W.H. Johnson, Pioneer Spaniards in North America, (Little, Brown and Co., Boston, 1903) p.349.

CHAPTER IV

TEZCOCO AND EARLY EDUCATION

One of the characteristics of a true culture surely is education of the young or interest in their intellectual development. There was no education as we understand the term among the natives of Mexico before the coming of the Spaniards. What schools they had were conducted in order to train the priests to carry on their bloody worship which has been described as "a compound of animism and fetishism in which the latter was dominant."[1] What education there was was directed toward the worship of the god of war. The Calmecac was a religious school to which the sons of the nobles were sent at an early age. In this school they were trained for the Aztec priesthood. The Telpochalli was the military school where the members of the wealthy received their training. Instruction in both schools was similar and the discipline was very rigid. The Telpochalli was devoted to the art of war and the Calmecac included training in the Aztec ritual.

Warwas glorified for the sake of religion. The religious rites of the Aztecs required human sacrifices to appease their gods and these victims were obtained by wars of conquest. The common people were the ones who had to carry on this warfare and provide the human sacrifices. There was no special training needed for their work consequently there was no general public education.[2] The children of the poor were not permitted to attend what schools did exist. The natives were skilled in many trades and in some of the arts

1. Lowery, op.cit., p.55
2. Icazbalceta, "Education in the City of Mexico, in the Sixteenth Century" p101

especially in weaving and feather-work, but there is no evidence of any formal training in these. The children of the poor learned from their parents and thus perpetuated the trade in the family.

When Fray Pedro beheld the abject misery of most of the natives, his heart was touched and he resolved to rescue them from the powers of darkness. With their conversion in mind, he devoted his time to learning their language.[3] This was no simple task for a man of forty-four, but Pedro was undaunted. He mingled with the children in their play and noted and studied the words used by them. The older children were very helpful and appeared to enjoy their role of teacher.[4] In a short time Fray Pedro had adquired a vocabulary large enough for him to tell the children of the true God.

He was particularly anxious to instruct the sons of the caciques, or chiefs, for he realised they were the important members of the tribe and he hoped to reach the others through them.[5] These Indians had a system of hieroglyphics, and so in the early days, before he was thoroughly conversant with their language, Fray Pedro adopted picture writing as a means of instruction, and the natives, who were accustomed to their own hieroglyphic figures, readily understood him.[6] The first things he taught were what he considered every Christian ought to know, namely, how to bless himself and how to kneel properly; and the four important prayers, the Pater Noster, Ave Maria, Creda, and Salve Regina. These were all taught in Latin, before he became familiar with the vernacular. Many of the doctrinas, or books of

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Bancroft, History of Mexico, II,p.374.
5 Mendieta, op.cit., p.608.
6 Marc F. Vallette, "An Unwritten Page in the History of Education," in American Catholic Quarterly Review. Vol. 42 (Philadelphia, 1917), pp.623-642, p.631.

religious instruction of the early period, that have been found in Mexico, contain these prayers in Latin. Perhaps the motive for teaching them in the language of the Church was to familiarize the natives with the prayers so they would recognize them when heard during Mass or other services.[7]

Fray Pedro gathered his pupils about him in a building adjoining the convent. In a letter written to Charles V, in 1523, he said: "I have undertaken to teach the children to read and write and to sing ... and in order to do so a school has been built on the grounds adjoining our house with sufficient capacity to accommodate from five to six hundred children who meet daily."[8] These natives of New Spain seemed very anxious to learn, and while this first school was only a temporary structure it served its purpose very well.[9] This school of Gante's at Tezcoco was the first public school in New Spain, was for the natives, and was a primary and a gratuitous school.[10]

Pedro studied the customs of the natives as well as their dialect. He was impressed by their fondness for the solemnities of their bloody worship and like a true educator was continually looking for avenues of approach to stimulate interest. He recognized the possibilities religious dramas afforded to convey his message to them. Almost from the beginning of his work among them he made use of these dramas.[11] He was soon aware, too, of the great love for music which these people possessed and he made music another means of

7. Marc F. Vallette, op.cit., p.630.
8. Ibid., p.628.
9. Engelhardt, "The Earliest Books in the New World," in United States Catholic Historical Society Monograph Series X. edited by T. Meehan, (New York, 1928), pp.10-14, p.12.
10. Vallette, op.cit., p.627; Bancroft, History of Mexico II, p.181.
11. Catholic Encyclopedia, X. p.259.

preaching to them. The following is part of a letter written by Gante:

> By the grace of God, I began to understand them and to see how they must be won. I noted that in their worship of their gods, they were always singing and dancing before them. Always before a victim was sacrificed to the idol they sang and danced before the image. Seeing this and that all their songs were addressed to the gods, I composed very solemn songs regarding the law of God and the faith, how God became man in order to free humanity, and how He was born of a Virgin, Mary, who remained wholly pure and without stain. Likewise I gave them certain patterns to paint on their shawls for the dances, as they were accustomed to do, according to the dances and the songs which they sang. Thus they were dressed gaily, or in mourning or for victory. Then when Christmas time drew near, I invited every one from a radius of twenty leagues to come to the festival of the Nativity of our Redeemer. So many came that the patio would not hold them and they sang, the very night of Nativity, "To-day is born the Redeemer."[12]

When the group of Spanish Franciscans, sometimes referred to as "the twelve apostles," arrived in 1524, they asked the Flemings why they had not made more progress, and what they had been doing. To these very arrogant questions Father de Tecto tersely replied, "We have been learning a theology unknown to St. Augustine (namely) the language of these Indians."[13] However, when Father Martin de Valencia, who was in charge of the group, saw with what recollection the natives who had been instructed by Fray Pedro assisted at the holy sacrifice of the Mass, he advised that they be baptized immediately.[14] From this it would appear that Gante had been working diligently and that his arduous labor had not been in vain.[15] It remains a source of wonderment why the great work of Gante has been unrecognized by Franciscans

12. Braden, op. cit., p.155 quoted from Codice Franciscano. Nueva Coleccion de Documentos, IV. p.221.
13. Cuevas, op.cit., p.165.
14. Griffin, op.cit., p.5.
15. Father Bayle,S.J. La Educacion Popular in Nueva España, states that Pedro had a school of 1000 pupils at Texcoco. He probably mistook this school for the one founded later in Mexico City.

and Spaniards. Some present day observers seem to miss the purpose entirely of his long years of work among the natives. One of the last books emanating from Mexico on education in Mexico contains the astounding information that "the school of Fray Pedro was the precursor and indirect pattern for today's socialistic rural schools."[16]

The two Flemings who had come to New Spain with Fray Pedro, learned the native language at Tezcoco, then according to some writers,[17] accompanied Cortés on his expedition to Honduras in 1525, where presumably both perished from sickness or privations. Authorities differ on this point, and little is known of their labors, for "the chroniclers confined their attention almost exclusively to those sent out by the Spanish prelates."[18] Pedro remained in Tezcoco until 1527 and devoted his whole time to the natives. He started his first school in 1523 and by the time the Spanish Franciscans arrived, it was well established. During his stay at Tezcoco Pedro made numerous trips to Tlascala and other provinces. He also built the chapel which is now in the large and beautiful atrium of the cathedral of Tezcoco.[19]

From the time of their arrival, the friars chanted the Divine Office and one of Fray Pedro's first tasks was to train the natives in European music so that they could assist at Vespers. Historians do not tell us when or where

16 George I. Sánchez, Mexico, A Revolution by Education (The Viking Press, New York, 1936), p.43.
Rev. Wilfred Parsons, S.J. Mexican Martyrdom. (The Macmillan Company, New York, 1936) Devotes many pages to these later athestic schools.

17 Bancroft, History of Mexico, II. p.161, states that Tecto perished in 1525 on Honduras expedition and that Aora accompanied him and died on the same journey. He gives as his authority the letter of Gante in Ternaux-Compans Voyages. Series 1. Tom. X. 191-200. Mendieta, op.cit., p.607 says Aora died while catechising at Tezcoco soon after his arrival and that his body was removed to the Franciscan Convent at Mexico after its completion.

18 Ibid., p. 162.

19 Chávez, op.cit., p.15.

Fray Pedro received the musical education, which later he found so valuable, but music was one of the arts popular in Flanders during Pedro's boyhood. In fact, as has already been stated, the period from 1400 to 1550, is known in musical history as "the age of the Netherlands," because of the contributions made by men of northern France, Belgium, and Holland to its advancement. Many of these masters were trained in the convents and chapel schools.[20]

The emperor Charles V. was very fond of music and never travelled without his singers and his Maestro de Capilla. He enjoyed singing and often sang with the church choir and was very quick to point out any mistakes that were made.[21] The following story would indicate he was well versed in the musical works of the period, too.

> One day a maestro de Capilla came from Seville, a man called Guerrero, bringing a book of motets and masses which he had composed. The Emperor ordered one of the masses to be sung. When it was over, he sent for his confessor and said to him "O Hideputa, he is a clever thief, this Guerrero, he has stolen this passage from so and so, and that one from some one else." The singers were astonished for they had not noticed it, until it was pointed out to them afterwards."[22]

Since the Emperor displayed so much interest in music it seems natural to expect his subjects would be interested also. Then too, during the fifteenth century, a youth, destined for the work of the Church was expected,

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20. Edward Dickinson, Music in the History of the Western Church (Smith Elder and Co., London, 1902), p.149.
21. J.B. Trend, The Music of Spanish History to 1600, (Oxford University Press, 1926), p.144.
22. Ibid., p.146.

> ...to become proficient in the theory of music, the art of organ playing, and in singing ....Moreover in the monasteries the construction of musical instruments destined for the service of the Church was carried on; the precenter, chanter or choirmaster, whichever he happened to be called - was expected to be able to make all necessary repairs on the organ. It seems certain that Pedro de Gante had at least observed the methods of instruments construction, although he may never have had any practice in the musical field.[23]

Fray Pedro worked diligently to train the Indian boys in vocal music and, at Tezcoco for the first time in North America, the voices of the Indians, under Pedro's supervision, were raised in the tones of the plain chant.[24] Here he inaugurated the first school for Church Music in the Western Hemisphere. The task was not as easy as it sounds for at first the Indians were not anxious to sing, because, they said, they could not sing like the Spaniards.[25] This was quite true and illustrates what keen observers these boys were. Their voices were thin and piercing and most of the time out of tune. But Fray Pedro was persistent and while the voices of his pupils could not compare with those of the Spaniards either in sweetness or in strength, he selected the best of the group and gave them special training for the church choirs. Training seems to have been very helpful, for Mendieta was inclined to think that some of the singers were so well-trained that they could have successfully competed with singers from the Cathedral choirs of Europe.[26]

Instruction in singing was given to all and with cultivation their voices gradually improved. The Indians loved music. It was one of the surest

23 Spell, op.cit., pp.372-373.
24 Ibid.,p.374.
25 Ibid.,p.375.
26 Mendieta, op. cit., p.411.

approaches that Pedro could have used to arouse their interest. The Mexican of to-day is noted for his appreciation of music and the roving bands of musicians which are seen throughout that country are the delight of the American tourist. Fray Pedro is responsible in no small measure for that inbred love of music and he deserves some credit too for the instrumental bands, for he was the first Bandmaster in North America. He taught instrumental as well as vocal music and often when no organ was available for church services a band of Indian flute-players was substituted and helped to make the services more impressive.[27] It was customary to have these bands accompany the native preachers on their weekly trips and those who were not curious enough to come to hear the preachers, would at least assemble to listen to the bands.

The boys were not given instruction in the use of the instruments until they had been taught to copy musical manuscript. They spent many months drawing even lines, making clear notes, and copying music before Fray Pedro introduced them to the art of "ecclesiastical song."[28] Very beautiful copies of the paslter are said to have been made in this school. So far as is known however,none of them are in existence to-day, but copies dating from the sixteenth century may still be seen in Mexico, and it is an accepted fact that the work was introduced into the New World by Pedro de Gante.[29] The musical manuscripts which the boys copied were used in the churches, so that in addition to learning to copy music the pupils also supplied the choirs with sheet music. When these boys had mastered the plain and figured chant they were sent out to the churches and chapels to teach the congregations. Boys and

27. Bancroft, History of Mexico, II, p.171.
28. Spell, op.cit., p.376.
29. Ibid.

girls and older Indians thus learned much of the Christian ritual and doctrine by singing, and the melodies and words were long retained in their memories. Their work was so effective that the smallest villages had singers who could assistat Mass and Vespers by chanting, and musicians who could play some musical instruments.[30]

Fray Pedro taught his pupils how to make musical instruments as well as how to play them, for the Indians had no stringed instruments before the Conquest.[31] The first organ that was constructed in America was built under Pedro's supervision, in 1527. Within fifty years of the Conquest, flutes, flageolets, Alpine horns, guitars played with a bow, cornets, bassoons, trombones, and the kettle-drum were popular in Mexico. In reading of the presence of these instruments in New Spain we are likely to assume that they were imported from Europe, but authorities tell us they were made by the natives, and the work was supervised by their Spanish teachers. In 1574 what might be called a census was taken in Mexico City, which showed among other things, that there were workmen's guilds established there. The instrument-makers had a special guild and many of the members were Indians who became extremely skillful at their trade.[32]

The organ was used for church services while the rebec, guitar, harp, and monochord were the instruments most commonly used for entertainment. The organs in the churches were played by students from Pedro's school. A few years after mastering music, the Indians began to compose Christmas Carols, hymns, masses, and other works which showed that they possessed creative

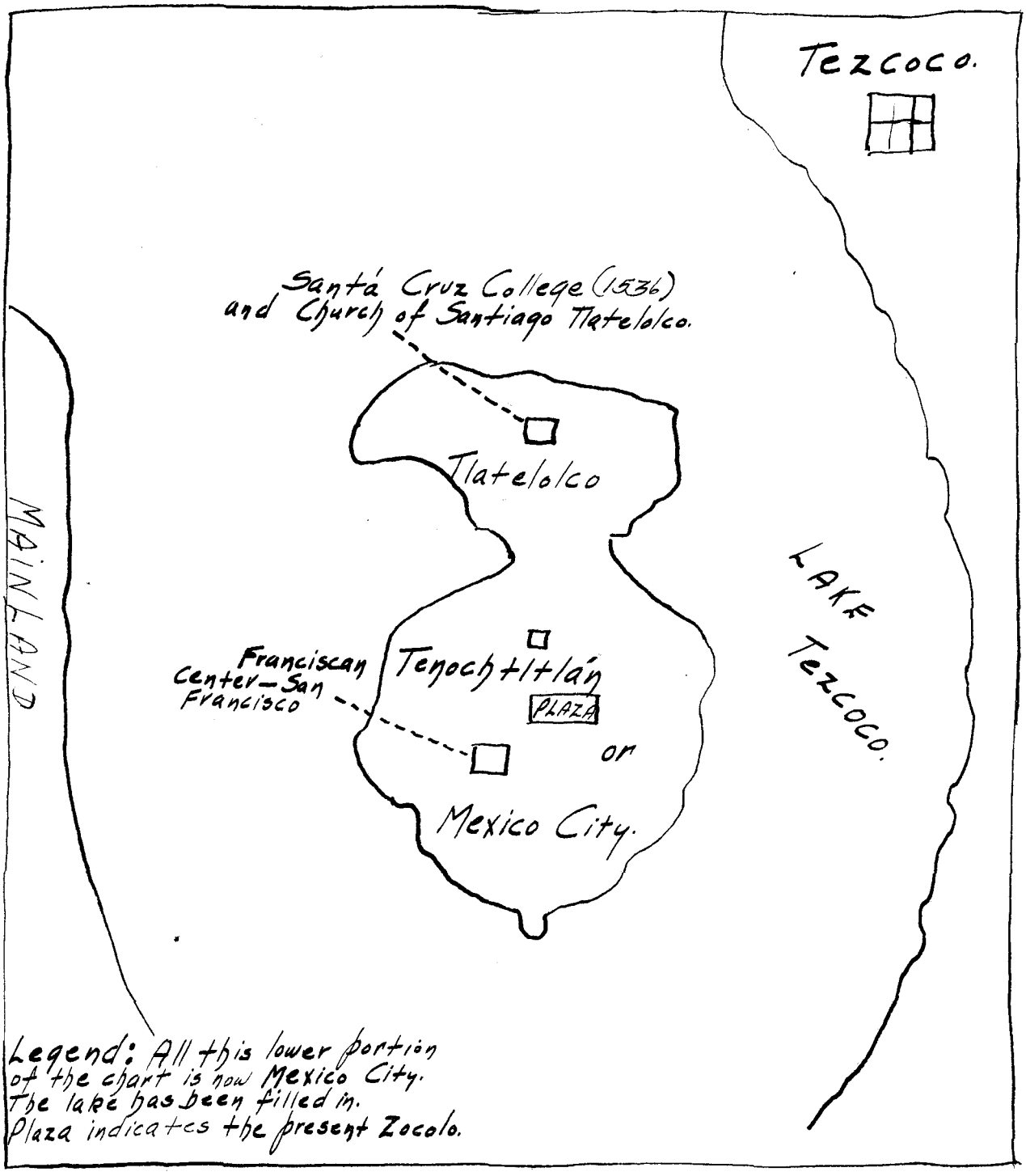
30. Spell, loc. cit.
31. Eleanor Hague, Latin American Music Past and Present (The Fine Arts Press, Santa Ana, California, 1934), p.22
32. Hague, op. cit., p.23.

ability. When the twelve Spanish Franciscans scattered about the valley of Mexico, they established churches and of course they wanted choirs and organists for them. These demands had to be met by the pupils from Fray Pedro's school and he saw to it that sufficient numbers were trained to meet all requests.[33]

After working with the children for a time Fray Pedro decided to extend his instructions to the adults. He had noted the great love for music which the natives possessed so he made music his medium of approach. He gathered the men and women into the patio and had them recite hymns. He soon realized that they not only did not understand what they were saying but that they were not even interested. However, he refused to become discouraged. Instead he composed a hymn containing the points of doctrine which he had been trying to impress upon his audience and with the aid of some of the older children, he translated it into Aztec. His next step was to set the words to a pleasant tune which, when he presented it to his pupils, proved very attractive and popular, and in a short time these adults had mastered the articles of faith which the hymn contained.[34] He knew that these primitive people were still children mentally, and that if he were to hold their interest, he would have to vary his approach. But he was equal to the task and adopted their custom of singing and dancing and associated music and the dance with religion.[35]

33. Spell, loc. cit., p. 374-377
34. Bancroft, History of Mexico, II, p.174.
35. Braden, op.cit., p.151.

Mexico City and Environs in Time of Gante.



Legend: All this lower portion of the chart is now Mexico City. The lake has been filled in. Plaza indicates the present Zocolo.

CHAPTER V

MEXICO

While Gante was teaching in Texcoco other Franciscans were developing a famous center of missionary and educational activity in Mexico City. The "Twelve Apostles," led by Father Martín had arrived in the capital in 1524 and were welcomed by Gante and the civilized population. In 1527 at the request of Father Martín, Fray Pedro moved the center of his activities from Texcoco, across the lake to Mexico City, the capital and center of all Spanish activities. Here the Franciscan convent of the Holy Ghost had already been established by Father Martín, but it is safe to say that Pedro as a member of the Order had frequently visited his brethren, the Spanish Franciscans. Presumably his work at Texcoco and his knowledge of languages were the reasons for his new appointment for very soon Fray Pedro erected schools adjoining the convent. Some say he founded San Juan de Letrán, others, the Gran Escuela of San Francisco.[1] Perhaps the reason for the confusion is that the position of these buildings is not clearly understood.

The Franciscans had received a plot of ground in the city of Mexico and on it they developed what might be termed a Franciscan center. The site, now in the heart of Mexico City, was at that early date on the outskirts of the group of new buildings put up by the Spaniards around the Plaza. Here, as elsewhere, the friars followed a definite building plan. The church extended from east to west, and to the north of, and forming a square with it, was the school and its dormitories. Between the church and school was a

1. Vallette, op.cit., p.631.

large patio.[2] As the needs of the friars increased, other buildings were erected to complete the square, and each building was given a name. San Juan de Letrán and San Francisco were both parts of the Franciscan Center. The name San Juan de Letrán in the early days was applied to an infant orphanage which later was used as a hospital for Indian boys. Fray Pedro had founded both the orphanage and the hospital.[3] Later, apparently, this building or a newer one going under the name of the Colegio of San Juan de Letrán was used to house the foundlings of the city, for the Viceroy Mendoza confiscated this building of the Franciscans for that purpose in 1547. At the time, he promised to give them another building to which they could transfer their hospital and school, but this promise was never fulfilled.[4]

In 1553 San Juan de Letrán became a college and sort of normal school for the mestizos. At that time it was under the control of the Viceroy, so Vallette is correct in saying Fray Pedro did not found this College of San Juan de Letrán.[5] He credits Pedro with founding a hospital and of supporting it for many years. The point he fails to make clear is that the hospital was San Juan de Letran, that the building was the same which had been confiscated by the Viceroy,[6] and that the inmates were always under the care of the Franciscans. Under these circumstances it is no great presumption to say that Gante aided at least and probably directed the affairs of this benevolent institution during many of the years of its existence.

2 Icazbalceta, "Education in the City of Mexico, in the Sixteenth Century," p. 102.
3 Allegre, op.cit., I, p.181.
4 Icazbalceta, "Education in Mexico," p.112.
5 Vallette, op.cit., p.631.
6 Icazbalceta, "Education in Mexico," p.

While the orphans occupied part of his attention in 1527, progress was being made by Gante in the school of San Francisco for which he became justly famous. This school in Mexico was conducted in the same manner as the one at Tezcoco had been and the course of studies was just as varied. In a letter of June 1529, mentioned above he described his work thus:-

> ....We are divided into nine convents living in the houses that the natives made for us, separated from one another by seven, ten, or even fifty leagues. Thus we work for the conversion of these pagans each one according to his force and spirit.
>
> My work is to preach and teach day and night. During the day I teach reading, writing and singing; at night I teach Christian Doctrine and preach. As the country is very large, populated by an infinite number of pagans, and as the Friars who preach are few, to teach such a multitude we gather together in our houses the sons of the principal lords to teach them the Catholic faith which they afterwards teach their fathers. These boys learn to read, write, sing, preach and take part in the divine office. I have under my charge in the city of Mexico five hundred or more. As this is the capital of the country I have selected one hundred and fifty of the more promising and each week I teach them apart what they have to do to preach the following Sunday which is not light work for me. I am engaged in this work day and night, writing and arranging their sermons. On Sundays the boys go out to preach in the city and the whole neighborhood within four, eight, ten, twenty and thirty leagues announcing the Catholic faith and by their teaching preparing the pagans to receive Baptism. We go around with them, destroying idols and temples in one section while they do the same in another, and erecting temples to the true God!
>
> Thus in these occupations we spend out time doing all manner of work day and night, that these pagan people come to the knowledge and faith of Jesus Christ. I, by the mercy of God, and for His honor and glory in this province of Mexico where I live, which is another Rome, by my industry and with the divine help have erected more than one hundred houses consecrated to the lord; Churches and chapels. Every time I go out to preach I have all I can do, destroying idols and building churches to the true

> God .... pray to God for me that hearing your prayers, He may enlighten me so that I may know what I have to do, and do it and persevere in His service and will, to the end ....[7]

The Spaniards have been severely criticized and condemned for destroying the idols of the natives, but their critics do not seem to realize that it was their religious zeal that prompted the Spaniards to act as they did. The Catholic Religion was a part of them. Harrassed as they had been for centuries by the Moors, they intended to end the pagan practices in New Spain as quickly as possible. The Spaniards believed in one true God. To them idolatry was a sinful practice very displeasing to God, and in order to make the Indians understand this it was necessary to employ drastic measures. This sort of destruction was rampant in Europe even after the time of Gante in Mexico. Catholic churches have been repeatedly disfigured and burnt, images and windows broken, in every country of Europe. So why condemn the Spanish alone?

One writer feels that "this destruction is compensated by the full initiation of the indigenous family in Christendom, by the abolition of the bloody superstitions by having put them into the road that was to conduct them to solidarity with the world of civilization ... those men were no archaeologists, they were apostles; they deemed necessary what they did; their purpose was superior to the value of the monuments how valuable soever we may suppose them; the loss was irreparable, the gain was immeasurable."[8]

The natives loved Fray Pedro and undoubtedly when they saw him destroying their idols, they must have been impressed. They evidently did not resent his actions, for had they desired, they could very easily have stopped

7 Griffin, op.cit.,pp 9-10.

8 Mexico Its Social Evolution. Edited by Justus Sierra, translated into English by G. Sentinon. 2 vols.(Mexico,J.Ballesca & Co.1900) I,p.92

him. He was only one unarmed foreigner among them. But they looked upon him as their friend and felt he was trying to help them. Apparently they were willing to have him destroy anything that displeased him.

The idea that the natives feared to oppose the Spaniards has been advanced by some historians but Bancroft attributes the success of the policy followed by the friars not so much to fear of opposing the Spaniards as to the fact that the natives felt "that the religion of men so superior in prowess and intelligence must contain some virtue, something superior to their own."[9]

The practice of sending native boys among their people to preach Catholic doctrine pleased Father Martín. When he and the other Spanish Franciscans arrived in 1524, the Mexings taught them the Aztec tongue. Later Father Martín divided the group into four bands whom he sent in different directions around Mexico City to preach to the inhabitants. Each group was accompanied by an Indian boy selected most frequently from Fray Pedro's school, who assisted the friars in instructing the natives. The plan was so practical that it was followed for more than two centuries after the manner of these native assistants who had been trained in Pedro de Gante's school.[10]

This system when we reflect upon the conditions prevailing in the land of the Aztecs a short fifteen years before is remarkable. Indian boys were trained in leadership, and were inspired with sufficient missionary zeal to enable them to face their pagan associates and preach to them of the true God. Certainly Fray Pedro must have possessed many sterling qualities himself to be able to animate these boys sufficiently to induce them to give up their

9. Bancroft, Mexico II, p.181.
10. Braden, op.cit., p.156.

evenings to learning what he had to teach them and then to spend their Sundays going about preaching, often to hostile groups. In his letter to Philip II in 1558, Fray Pedro again related how in the early days the boys were gathered together from Mexico and the surrounding territory, a select group of sons of the Indian nobles. He explains that they were kept day and night in the school house of the Franciscans and were not allowed to go back to their parents - were even kept from talking to them so that they might forget their pagan idol worship.[11]

The extraordinary success of Fray Pedro in his work is almost unexplainable, but when we reflect upon his kindness of heart, his many benevolent acts, his self-sacrificing conduct and his exemplary life, added to his apostolic zeal and his unlimited patience, we are getting close to the answer. In less than a year he was instructing over five hundred children and the first building provided was too small for his needs. He felt more would be accomplished if the boys could remain at the convent at night for he realized his instructions were not going to be very effective if the children were permitted to return to their homes daily and participate in pagan ceremonies. He went about making his needs known to the Spaniards and finally roused them sufficiently to have them start work on a new structure.

The Indians were interested in the project. They were careful observers and excellent imitators and were very anxious to help Fray Pedro. After they had watched the methods of procedure for a few days the older boys were permitted by the friars to assist in the construction of the building. They worked so faithfully that the school was ready for use in a very short time.

11. Icazbalceta, Codice Franciscano, p.220.

This was the beginning of their education in manual training, for Fray Pedro noted their ability in this field and made use of it later. His Flemish trait of industry was being impressed upon others. When the building was completed many of the boys remained night and day and in addition to educating them, it became necessary for the friars to feed and clothe them. Until 1532 they received no assistance in this work and in order to carry on had to depend upon the alms of the faithful which at times were not sufficient to care for all the needs of the pupils in the school. In 1532 Fray Pedro appealed to the Emperor for a regular grant of corn to help support the school.[12]

At first it was difficult to induce the caciques to send their own sons for instruction. They were anxious to please Fray Pedro but they could not understand the importance of education and obstinately refused to allow their children to attend the school until the Spanish authorities were called upon to force them to do so. This "was the first attempt at compulsory education in the New World."[13] Then, as now, there were those who evaded the regulation. It is amusing to note that many of the caciques, not daring to disobey the law openly, sent the children of their servants instead of their own sons to school. Later on these chiefs were so impressed by the advantages gained by the youths that they begged Fray Pedro to let their own children to attend his classes.[14] An account has been given of the special training accorded the sons of the caciques and Pedro's reason for selecting them for

12 Bancroft, History of Mexico, II, p.173.
13 Vallette, op.cit., p.650. However, it is likely that the native children of Tezcoco were forced to go to school.
14 Ibid.

preachers, and needless to say he was delighted when the objecting chiefs relented. It may be mentioned that "selling" the idea of education to natives of Mexico was no small achievement.

All instruction was necessarily oral at first for the pupils were unable to read and the teachers had no books. However, as Fray Pedro advanced in his study of the native tongue the course of study in his school was enlarged. The membership increased until at times one thousand boys were assembled for religious and secular education. Pedro saw to it that these children were instructed in reading, writing, vocal and instrumental music, as well as in Christian Doctrine.

In 1527 Fray Pedro composed a book, in Aztec, which he called Doctrina cristiana en lengua Mexicana. This was a catechism which he intended should be used in teaching the Christian religion to the natives. He sent the work to Antwerp for publication and it was published in 1528.[15] Having books printed in Europe, however, did not prove entirely satisfactory, for the Europeans did not understand Aztec and could not proof-read the work.[16] This was one of the reasons why the missionaries did not wish to send manuscripts to Europe to be printed. Another reason probably was the expense and the length of time required for books to be transported back and forth. The story of how they solved this problem is part of the next chapter.

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15. According to Vetancourt it was printed at Amberes, (Menologia, 26 de Junio, Varones Illustres, No.5) Beristain, Biblioteca Hispano-Americano, II, 17, puts the date of this publication as 1528. No copy of the book has been found. This publication of Gante's had led some to attribute to him the Doctrine Breve of Zumarraga's which is reputedly the first book printed in America (1539). The mere fact that no copy of the book published by Gante remains, is no argument that it never existed.

16 Vallette, op.cit., p.639.

CHAPTER VI

TRAINING OF GIRLS AND ADULT EDUCATION

After much persuasion and compulsion the Indians were induced to send their sons to school, but to make them understand the importance of giving their daughters religious instruction was quite another story. The realization that only a part of the children were being trained apparently worried that tireless worker, Fray Pedro, and he attempted to devise a plan whereby the native girls could be taught Christian doctrine. He made arrangements for them to assemble in the patio between the church and school and assigned some of the older boys to instruct them in the Catechism.

Before the Conquest some of the daughters of the chiefs and nobles had been trained in the temple schools. There they were given instruction in the care of the temple and in domestic duties but no attempt was made in these institutions to teach any subject that would further the development of their intelligence. In addition to the temple school there was the Cuicoyan, a s school for girl-singers and dancers which was nothing more than an official house of prostitution.[1] As this was the only school open to the daughters of the common people it had been customary for them to keep their girls in seclusion and what training they received was given in their own homes and was limited to a very elementary knowledge of the domestic arts. The center where Fray Pedro attempted to assemble the native girls was in the Spanish section of the city and that was one reason the parents gave for refusing to send their daughters. But as always, Fray Pedro was persistent. After a

1. Icazbalceta, "Education in the City of Mexico in theSixteenth Century."p.99

time a few girls came to the patio and gradually the number increased.

At first the only instruction given was in Christian Doctrine, but Bishop Zumárraga felt this was not enough and at his suggestion the Colegio de Tezcoco was founded in 1529 by the Franciscans.[2] While it was called a College it resembled what in later years in this country was termed an academy. The girls were placed under the care of Spanish matrons.[3] The Bishop sent word to Spain of his need for teachers for the native girls and in answer to his plea, Spanish laywomen were sent from the homeland. Shortly after they arrived in New Spain however, they either were married or were hired by the Spaniards to instruct their children. The only practical plan seemed to be to place the girls under the care of nuns, so steps were taken to get religious orders of women to come to Mexico.

In 1525, there had been established in Mexico City, what Engelhardt terms the first convent of women in the New World.[4] In that year Ferdinand de Sylva, Count of Centifonte, set apart a house in Mexico City for a group of ladies who desired to retire from the world. There they accepted and professed the rule of the Third Order of St. Francis. This same nobleman erected another building which he gave to these Sisters to be used as a school for the education of young ladies.[5]

In 1530 a group of Poor Clares and a number of the Sisters of the Third Order Regular accompanied the wife of Cortes from Salamanca to New

2. Braden, op.cit., p.151; O'Gorman, op.cit., p.260.
3. Vallette, op.cit., p.633.
4. Engelhardt, "The Earliest Books in the New World," p.14.
5. Ibid.

Spain,[6] for the express purpose of teaching the daughters of the natives. Part of the instructions issued to the SecondAudiencia and dated July12,1530, stated that "the nuns sent to teach native girls should be protected and favored both by the Audiencia and the bishop."[7] Another part of the same order said "that all women, natives and Spanish, should know how to spin and weave."[8]

In a letter which Bishop Zumárraga sent to the Franciscan general at Toulouse dated June 12, 1531, he said in part:

> For the maintenance and teaching of the girls her Serene Highness Empress Isabel sent from Spain six honorable women, judicious and prudent, and commanded by her decrees that a house be erected so large and complete that the same women living retired with the protection and favor of the bishop will be able to keep 1000 maids and teach them to live righteously and thus in a most admirable manner the Indians are converted to the Catholic faith. The maids learn the first rudiments of the faith from (these) honorable women and the Indians from the religious men. Afterwards these Indian youths of both sexes teach their pagan parents what they have learned.[9]

From extant letters and cedulas of the period it is evident that some provision was made for the education of girls. In spite of the available evidence there are writers of the history of education who are not so convinced of this fact. One of these authors asserts that the first nuns came from Spain in 1540 and that they were in Mexico City for thirty years before they established a second convent and that "it was not until 1754 that a congregation was formed for the definite work of teaching."[10]

6. Engelhardt, Catholic Encyclopedia, VI, p.299.
7. Bancroft, History of Mexico, II, p.324.
8. Ibid.
9. O'Gorman, "Franciscans in Mexico in the Sixteenth Century," in American Ecclesiastical Review, LXXXI September 1929. pp.244-270. pp. 256-257.
10 W.Kane,S.J. An Essay Toward a History of Education (Loyola University Press, Chicago, 1935) p.530.

While schools for girls may not have flourished in the early days an attempt was made as early as 1525 to educate them and much of the credit for establishing those early schools should go to Pedro de Gante. Alegre says "that after he catechized and baptized more than a million of Indians with his own hand and destroyed more than ten million idols he began to educate the Indian boys and girls for whom he founded distant colleges, which he himself governed with admirable prudence and utility until 1572, the year of his death."[11]

Two of the schools which Gante founded, the Colegio de Niñas (1547) and San Juan de Letrán, were famous institutions in Mexico City and both continued their work until the middle of the nineteenth century. The first one, as its name tells, was a school for girls. As for San Juan de Letrán, we know girls were in attendance there for after the Viceroy confiscated the building, the supervision of the girls was assigned to the oidor Tejeda.[12] Since their supervision was definitely assigned to the oider, there must have been girls to supervise. Again, Alegre in explaining why the Jesuits did not take charge of San Juan de Letrán when the Archbishop Don Pedro Moya de Contreras offered it to them in 1581, says that Father Plaza, the provincial of the Jesuit Province of New Spain, called a consultation with the other members of the Province and decided against taking over the college for several reasons: they would have to take charge of the hospital also, and this they could not do, and then there were girls to be taught, and this was against the

11. Alegre, op.cit., p.180.
12. Aiton, op.cit., p.106.

custom of the Company.[13]

Of course the first schools established for girls did not offer an extensive education. Some of the pupils learned to read but for the most part their knowledge did not go much beyond that of the Catechism and domestic duties. They were trained in politeness, the Christian virtues and the social duties of their particular state in life, which for most of them amounted to training in the domestic arts, sewing, and tilling of the soil.[14] There was no reason for the women to study what the men studied. The duties of the Indian woman centered round the home and a knowledge of how to perform those duties well, was all she was expected to know.

One reason for our lack of appreciation for what was done in the way of education in Mexico in the sixteenth century, is that we judge it by twentieth century standards. We may criticise those early Mexican schools but when we do it is well for us to remember that there was no general education for women in the English colonies until after the American Revolution. The town schools established in the colonies were, for the most part, for the education of boys. The few that did permit girls to attend offered them a very limited curriculum.[15] What is more, the schools in the English colonies were not free schools, which would indicate that the children of the poorer colonists were not admitted. There was no provision made for the training of Indians in the northern colonies.

13.Alegre, op.cit., I, p.181. Bustamante, editor of Alegre's work states in a footnote that this college exists to-day (1841) under the direction of Dr. D. José María Iturralde, up and doing in education; Icazbalceta, "Education in the City of Mexico in the Sixteenth Century," p.113, says it closed its doors about the middle of the nineteenth century.

14.Icazbalceta, "Education in the City of Mexico in the Sixteenth Century," p.109

15.Robert F. Seybolt, Source Studies in American Colonail Education. Bulletin No. 28, Bureau of Educational Research College of Education (University of Illinois, Urbana, 1925), p.69.

Education in Europe in the sixteenth century was given only to the women of the noble and wealthy families; to those in other words, who could employ private tutors. Yet in Mexico, we find Fray Pedro and the missionaries attempting to establish free public schools for the girls as well as the boys of the poorer classes of the indigenes. This was certainly a progressive move. Too progressive to be thoroughly appreciated even to-day.

This hard working lay brother was not satisfied with establishing schools for the children. From his earliest days among them he had the men assemble in the patio of the convent before going to work mornings and there he gave them instruction in Christian doctrine. Later he had buildings erected adjoining the boys' school where the grown-ups could obtain instruction. These developed into the schools of fine arts and crafts and trade schools.[16]

The work done by the pupils in the art school, such as painting pictures, wood-carving, embroidery, feather-work, and weaving, was used to decorate the churches and chapels throughout the valley of Mexico. In addition to giving instruction in the above-mentioned arts, Pedro trained his pupils to make ornamental work in stone.[17] Elaborate stone-work was done in Ghent in Pedro's time and the knowledge which he undoubtedly acquired as a youth, he unselfishly passed on to his eager pupils in New Spain. In the trade schools the adults and older boys were given instruction in all the trades. As a result there were to be found in Mexico City, natives who were expert plumbers, carpenters, tailors, shoemakers, blacksmiths, and painters.[18]

16. Mendieta, op.cit., p.609.
17. Arthur Helps, The Spanish Conquest in America (4 vols. John W. Parker & Son, London, 1902) III, p.195.
18. Mendieta, op.cit. p.609.

These Indians were apt pupils. There were only two grades which they could not acquire, one was that of glass-blowing, the other that of the apothecary.[19] After a time this training had a beneficial effect for the whole community benefited by the knowledge these craftsmen obtained.

Fray Pedro supervised the work in the classes and not only saw that the natives mastered the tasks assigned but also instilled in them a love for their work. The tradesmen trained in Pedro's school built the churches, chapels and schools for the missionaries in the surrounding country and thus justified, in his eyes, the establishment of that type of school. There were those who felt it was a waste of time to give the Indians any sort of training and when Fray Pedro was able to point to the many beautiful buildings which his pupils erected for Divine Services and the exquisite work they did at no cost to the Spaniards, he knew his labors were worth while. His only purpose in all of his undertakings was to glorify God and to help the Indians save their immortal souls. He went on the Christian principle that work is good for the soul and by his example made the natives understand that the true Christian does not spend his time in idleness. It had been the custom of the pagan Aztecs to offer tributes to their gods by building temples, carving idols, and erecting altars to them, so Pedro gave the Christian Indians opportunities to pay homage to the true God and thus through the study of human arts aborigines were led to understand those things which were spiritual and moreover, the Indians found themselves surrounded by buildings and edifices similar to those in Europe, which was no small education in itself and tended to a moral uplifting.

19 Bernal Díaz, The True History of the Conquest of New Spain (translated by Maurice Keating London, 1800). p.499.

Bishop-elect Zumárraga of Mexico, realized how necessary it was to have books and to have them in large editions and so when he returned to Spain in 1532 to be consecrated bishop, he managed to obtain a printing press for Mexico. Through his efforts and with the approval of Viceroy Mendoza, the first press was sent from Spain in 1536.[20] It was procured from Juan Cromberger, a printer of Seville. Juan Pablos was sent to Mexico to operate the press. Before leaving Spain he had to agree "not to print any book without a license from the Bishop of Mexico nor to use the name of Pablos on an imprint. All books must state they were printed in the House of Juan Cromberger."[21] Because of the lack of sufficient paper and other requisites no publications came from the press until 1539. The first book published in America The Doctrina Breve of Bishop Zumárraga was printed by this press.[22]

The Bishop was anxious to have the Indians learn the printing trade and hence Mexican apprentices were assigned to Pablos, and his pressman Gil Barbero. Undoubtedly, in a short time the natives were taught by these operators to make ink, to ink the pads and to pull the lever of the press.[23] Again the influence of Gante is noted. In his school, before the advent of the printing press, the natives were taught to draw, print letters and copy. This training prepared the way for the printing press.[24] The printing press in turn was responsible for a notable cheapening and multiplying of books and provided a powerful incentive to learn to read. Thus the invention of the printing press stimulated the growth of the elementary school.[25]

20. Engelhardt, "The Earliest Books in the New World," p. 11. gives the date as 1536 or 1537. Priestley, op.cit., 167 states that the press was brought in 1535.
D.C. McMurtie, The Golden Book (Pascal Corvici, Chicago, 1927) pp.227-28, says ... "José Torbio Medina, the greatest authority on Spanish American Printing, believes there was a printer at work in Mexico City from 1536 to 1538 - prior to the arrival of Pablos- and that his name was Estéban Martín. He adduces considerable evidence in support of this contention."

21. Stephen Henry Horgan, "A Technical Appreciation of the First American Printers," in United States Historical Society Monograph Series I. pp.15-27, p.26.
John Clyde Oswald, A History of Printing (D. Appleton & Co., New York, 1928). Gives all the credit for introducing printing into the Western Hemisphere to John Kromberger. Apparently he never heard of Zumárraga or Mendoza for no mention is made of them.
Isaiah Thomas, The History of Printing in America (2 vols., Worcester, Mass., 1810) I, p. 189 says "The art of printing was first introduced into Spanish America as nearly as can be ascertained at the close of the sixteenth century."
22. Juan Zumárraga, The Doctrina Breve. In facsimile in United States Catholic Historical Society Monograph Series I.
23. Horgan, op.cit., p.21.
24. Dr. Emilio Valton, Impresos Mexicanos del Siglo XVI. (Mexico, Imprenta Universitaria, 1936), p.5
25. Edward H. Reisner. The Evolution of the Common School. (The Macmillan Co., New York, 1930) p.22

CHAPTER VII

A SYSTEM OF PRIMARY EDUCATION AND THE BEGINNING OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

Just what did Fray Pedro accomplish in the field of Education? He is recognized to-day as the father of education in Mexico[1] and it is just possible that he may eventually receive the credit due him for his progressive ideas in our histories of Education. In summing up his work we may say that he was motivated by Christian Charity. He realized the great need for teachers in this new land and devoted the last fifty years of his life to teaching the aborigines. This was anything but a simple task. When he first went among them, none of the natives of Mexico could read or write and their language possessed no alphabet. So his first problem was to learn their dialect and then reduce it to some form of writing.[2]

What methods did he employ? Checking back we find that he believed in visual education, for one of the first methods he developed was a system of picture writing by means of which he was able to instruct the sons of the caciques. He objectified the chief mysteries of the Catholic Faith in pictures painted on canvas, similar to the mural pictures in use to-day. These were hung on the walls and with a long rod he pointed out the picture illustrating the doctrine being explained.[3]

Very soon in his work among them, Pedro realized the necessity of keeping the children away from the pagan influences of their own homes as explained before. Bishop Kelley speaking of this idea of Pedro's says that

1. Braden, op.cit., p.132.
2. Vallette, op.cit., p.633.
3. Icazbalceta, "Education in the City of Mexico in Sixteenth Century," p.103

the friar should be given credit for discovering the most satisfactory and surest way to instruct an aboriginal people,[4] while Zabre, an advocate of the nativistic policy of the present Mexican government, intimates that this method was too severe.[5] At any rate Pedro built dormitories and made it possible for the children to remain at the convent night and day and Zabre admits that the young people did, later on, voluntarily join Pedro's school.[6]

The school was built behind the church and consisted of low halls with dormitories and other rooms adjoining. The building could and often did accommodate one thousand boys who were housed and fed by the missionaries.[7] Every room was in charge of a prefect, who was usually an elderly Indian. It was the duty of the prefect "to hold the boys to their duties." The whole building was supervised by a friar, who saw that everything was served justly, and that food and clothing sent by parents or friends reached the pupils for whom they were intended.[8]

A very definite program was followed each day. The morning was given over to study of reading, writing, and singing and the afternoon was spent in religious instruction. In addition to their prayers and the Catechism the boys were taught the significance of the ceremonies of the Church and a love for the divine worship was instilled in their hearts.[9] It was from these groups that Fray Pedro selected fifty of the more advanced and intelligent pupils for special training as catechists.[10]

There is not an abundance of material available on the system of pupil-training used by Gante, but we do know that at times he had as many as

4. Kelley, op.cit., p.82.
5. Alfonso Teja Zabre, Guide to the History of Mexico (Mexico, 1935) p.156.
6. Ibid.
7. Kelley, op.cit., p.82 quoted from Icazbalceta, Bibliografía Mexicana del Siglo XVI pp.37-38.

one thousand boys in his school and that he did train the brighter ones to instruct the slower groups. He also permitted the children to aid in instructing the adults. This plan must have been successful for it was employed in all the early schools established by the friars. There were so few European teachers and so many pupils that it was absolutely necessary to follow Fray Pedro's method.[11]

Gante, like the sixteenth century Spaniards, was convinced that "the educational process concerned not a part of a man but the whole of him; if he did not reach his heart as well as his mind, it was not education at all."[12] Fray Pedro never lost sight of the fact that his main purpose was to Christianize the Indian, and that to give instruction in temporal things was only a secondary matter. It was necessary too, for him to consider the mentality of his pupils for it was obvious that he could not immediately make scholars out of these savages. He realized that they should be given only what they could absorb.[13] The task Fray Pedro attempted was so very difficult because the means were entirely disproportionate to the ends. Instead of only having to educate pupils as they arrived successively at the proper age, as we do to-day, Gante had to care for adults as well, who were in need of religious and civil instruction from the very foundations and who were not even familiar with the language of their teacher.[14]

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8 (continued from p.58) Engelhardt, "The Earliest Books in the New World," p. 13.
9 (continued from p.58) Ibid.
10(" " p.58) Cuevas, op.cit., p.160.
11 Kelley, op.cit. p.85.
12 Ibid., p.80.
13 Ibid.
14 Icazbalceta, quoted in Kelley, op.cit., p.82.

This pioneer teacher was conscious of individual differences among his pupils and classified them according to mental standards and attainments. He realized the uselessness of forcing higher education upon those who in the primary work demonstrated their inability to advance further. Consequently a type of work which this slower group could master was provided for them.[15] Nor did he give the same type of training to the poorer classes as to the sons of the caciques. In making a distinction his motive was not to emphasize class differences. But among the Indians there were definite class distinctions and Fray Pedro realized that the sons of the poorer people would never be called upon to rule or help in the government of the community and that they would have to earn their daily bread, so he attempted to train each one in the field for which he seemed to show a preference.

To-day in educational circles, we hear a great deal about individual differences and the necessity for providing for the slower groups, and the educators who advance these ideas are considered very modern and extremely progressive. Never at any time though is any mention made of the Flemish lay brother who put those theories into practice in Mexico four centuries ago.

Cubberley in his History of Education says that we owe to Frederick Froebel (1782-1852) three additions to elementary education, the kindergarten, the play idea, and handwork activities.[16] He goes on to say that Froebel's idea in his plan for introducing manual training was not to teach a boy a trade but to offer a form of educational expression for the purpose of developing creative power within the child.[17] Fray Pedro taught handwork in his school two hundred and fifty years before Froebel was born. If the

15 Icazbalceta "Education in the City of Mexico in the Sixteenth Century" p.104
16 Ellwood Cubberley, The History of Education (Houghton Mifflin Co., Cambridge, Mass., 1920) p.764.
17 Ibid., p 768

objection is made that Pedro's motive in teaching handwork did not coincide with the motives of the Moderns, at least Cubberley's definition of a Vocational School seems to indicate that Ganto did have the first Vocational School in America. Speaking of vocational education Cubberley says "To-day we no longer use the term vocational education in this rather general sense, (that is in referring to the training for the various vocations) but restrict its use to the specific training of individuals for some useful employment."[18] Train individuals for useful employment was exactly what Pedro did in his school of Arts and Crafts, in fact that was his motive in founding the school.

During the construction of the first school building he noticed that the natives were interested in the work being done and that when the older boys were permitted to help they displayed marked ability. He made a mental note of this and as soon as possible he opened his Trade School where those not fitted for advanced study were taught a trade. Many of the natives displayed great talent in the fine arts,[19] so Fray Pedro made a special effort to get a school of Arts and Crafts established, wherein individual differences were attended to.

The Spaniards loved and appreciated beauty in any form but were especially fond of painting and sculpture. They felt that the work of the artist was just as necessary in building a great city as that of the engineer. Consequently artists were brought to New Spain in the very early days.[20] While Cortés was still fighting for control of the new land, art treasures were sent as gifts to Mexico from the reigning house in Spain. As time went on, works of greater value were sent to the colonies to help the padres in

18 Cubberley, op.cit. p.806.
19 Kane, op.cit.,p.529; Aiton, op.cit. p.103.
20 Mary Gordon Holway, Art of the Old World in New Spain and the Mission Days

in their work of civilising the natives. These art treasures exerted a strong influence upon the character of the Indians.[21] When Fray Pedro was ready to begin his art classes, there were Spanish artists in Mexico in ready avail as teachers. Rodrigo de Cifuentes, one of the Spanish painters of the era, was a teacher in Fray Pedro's school.[22]

The chapel of San José was the first Art School in the New World. It was in that building that Pedro assembled those interested in art and began their artistic training. At the start, masterpieces from Spain and Flanders were used as models and the natives became expert at reproducing them.[23] At the same time they were developing a style and a technique peculiarly their own. Their Spanish teachers were so successful in developing the artistic talent of the Mexicans that during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the Spanish-American artists compared quite favorably with those of Europe.[24]

Painting was not the only art taught at SanJosé. The neophytes also learned to carve altar screens, choir stalls and other accessories for church use. They made insets of ivory and shell in the carvings as well as in the paintings. The native art of feather work was also employed for church decoration. The feather work was combined with very fine embroidery to add a touch of color. In this first school in North America, instruction in music, painting, and wood-carving was given to those not interested in Latin and Theology,[25] and the Trade School offered training in carpentry and other

20 (continued from p.61) Alta California (A.M.Robertson,San Francisco,1922) Preface.
21 Holway, op.cit, p.5
22 Ibid., p.46.
23 Ibid.,pp.25-44.
24 Kane, op.cit., p.529.
25 Holway, op.cit.

trades to those of less artistic temperaments, while religious instruction and training in politeness were given to all groups.[26] In other words Fray Pedro in his school combined instruction in the elementary and the higher branches, the mechanical and the fine arts.[27]

While much art work was produced in the early days, little of it has come down to us because "the missionaries did not know how to mix the pigments to withstand the chemical action upon color at the elevation of the Mexican plateau and their work besides growing ashy with the passing of years eventually became valueless for either artistic or historical purposes."[28] In a footnote Holway states that there is at the Mission Inn at Riverside in California, a portion of a very old painting by an unknown artist, representing the school of Fray Pedro, but that the canvas is so worn that with the exception of Gante the figures of the three padres are scarcely discernible.[29] Cuevas has a reproduction of what must be a very beautiful portraiture of Fray Pedro.[30] A few minutes' study of the picture reveal some of his traits. He is pictured as a manof medium height and slender build attired in the Franciscan habit, standing, apparently instructing a group of Indians. His fair complexion is very marked against the dark skins of the natives. His whole attitude betokens kindness and patience. It is hard to determine whether his hair is blond or white, but the high forehead, finely moulded features, and large serious eyes indicate intelligence, refinement and sincerity. One does not get the impression that he might have had a very keen sense of humor but one'is certain that he would be very tolerant. The

26 Kelley, op.cit., p.79.
27 Edward G. Bourne, Spain in America, vol.III. The American Nation Series (edited by A.B. Hart, New York, 1904) p.308.
28 Holway, op.cit., p.29.
29 Ibid., p.25.
30 Cuevas, op.cit., I, p.157.

picture indicates that he possessed humility without apparent obsequiousness and a determination which could develop into stubbornness.

Probably the most out-standing thing about the work done by Fray Pedro was the fact that it was all done among the indigenes-members of an inferior race, barbarians when he first went among them with no moral and very little mental development. The work started by him in 1523 grew until before his death in 1572 some of the natives were receiving a university education which was on a par with that given in the foremost universities of Europe.[51] He had given the Indians the Christian Religion; had taught them to read and had been instrumental in providing books in the native tongue; had developed their musical taste and their artistic sense; in fact had devoted his life to transmitting Spanish culture to them.

A system of primary education was established by Gante which spread throughout New Spain. The thorough training received in the primary schools led to a desire for higher education and the establishment of secondary schools. The College of Santa Cruz at Tlatelolco, opened in 1536, was the direct result of Gante's efforts to educate the natives. The brighter pupils had received instruction in Latin in his primary school and while some among the clergy objected to the Indians being taught any Latin, others felt they should be permitted to continue their studies in schools of higher learning. Some felt too, that a native clergy was the surest way of keeping the Indians Christian and with the end in view of training seminarians, the College of Santa Cruz de Santiago de la Tlatelolco was opened in 1536. It was not a success as a Seminary and after 1540 it was devoted to developing an educated

51. James Walsh, The Century of Columbus (Catholic Summer School Press, New York, 1914), p.280.

laity among the natives.[32] Some of the most distinguished men in the colony were members of the faculty of Santa Cruz. Bernardino de Sahagún, the founder of American anthropology and Juan de Torquemada, the author of Monarquia Indiana were two of the first teachers in this college.[33] Under such able professors native scholars were trained who later became teachers, not only in the college itself, but also in the monasteries. The old friars were so busy caring for the spiritual needs of the natives that the monastic houses lacked teachers for the young religious. At this period, the Indians were not allowed to receive the habit of the various orders and as a result these Indian professors became the teachers of the Spaniards and the Creoles, the conqurered taught the conquerors - without arousing the least bit of hatred or envy.[34] The thorough training in primary and secondary education being given in Mexico led to a desire for a university and on September 21, 1551, the imperial decree for the establishment of the University of Mexico was issued. This decree declared the university to be established "for the service of God and the public welfare of our kingdom, and because we desire to protect the inhabitants of our Indies from the darkness of ignorance."[35] The solemn opening of the University of Mexico took place on January 25, 1553. It was not necessary to send to Spain for professors to head this newly founded institution for there were many in Mexico who could meet the necessary requirements.[36] By the middle of the sixteenth century, New Spain was education-minded so to speak.

32. Francis Borgia Steck, O.F.M. "Early Mexico's Indian College: 1536, in The Commonweal, August 28, 1936, pp.422-424, p.423.
33. Merriman, op.cit., III, p.663.
34. Icazbalceta, "Education in the City of Mexico in the Sixteenth Century"108
35. Merriman, op.cit., III, p.664.
36. Icazbalceta, op.cit., p.116.

The seed which Pedro had planted flourished. He had trained the teachers who later taught in the schools; and the craftsmen who built the churches and chapels learned their trade from him. Thus he aided in the material as well as the spiritual building of the Archdiocese of Mexico. It is well known that ecclesiastical organization followed in the wake of the missionaries. After the land the peoples had been civilized regular parishes and dioceses were established and the missionary usually pushed on into the wilderness. But Gante though he remained in the organized life of the church always was the missionary at heart - Missionary of Education and Religion.

CHAPTER VIII

FRIEND AND COUNSELOR OF THE NATIVES

The great work in Education accomplished by Pedro de Gante was only a part of what he did in Mexico City, and he himself would probably have said, the least important part. He was always a defender of the Indians and they loved and trusted him implicitly. They looked upon him as their oldest and most powerful friend among the white men and went to him with all of their problems.[1] His extraordinary work did not go unnoticed by the Spaniards many of whom caused him much trouble. His labor was hampered by the bad example of the Spanish adventurers around the capital. Pedro protested so vigorously against the abuses heaped upon the natives by these men that in the early days the Spaniards had little love for him.[2]

FrayPedro was not only following the tenets of his great Christian faith but also trying to carry out the orders of the Emperor, who by his Laws of 1523 and 1526 had shown that he wanted the Indians to be treated fairly.[3] Souls meant something to him. Those laws strictly forbade all maltreatment or enslaving of the natives and exhorted all colonial officials to insist on their strict observance. But Mexico was a long way from Spain and unpopular decrees were not enforced.[4] In the orders sent to Cortés in 1523, Charles warned the Conquerors

> ...to avoid violence and breach of faith; to suppress human sacrifice, but without causing unnecessary irritation; to educate the Indians to Christianity, for a hundred won in this way were worth more than a hundred thousand by

1 O'Gorman, op.cit., p.253
2 Griffin, op.cit., pp.11-12.
3 Merriman, op.cit., III, p.660.
4.Ibid.

> force; to impose no heavier burdens than the taxes which had been paid to the caciques.[5]

In the instructions sent out in 1526, he denounced the greed and cruelty of the colonists and ordered the clergy to accompany the adventurers to every new settlement so that the natives would be taught that the Spaniards came "to free them and convert them to a milder faith, that they should be as Charles' other Christian subjects."[6] He showed in many ways that he was interested in the conversion and the humane treatment of the Indians.[7]

Fray Pedro realized how Charles V felt about the natives and he insisted upon law enforcement. Bishop-elect of Mexico, Juan Zumárraga, held the title of Protector of the Indians,[8] so Gante proceeded to interest him in their plight. After listening to Pedro's story, Zumárraga invited the caciques to the convent in Mexico. Fray Pedro acted as interpreter and explained to the chiefs how the Emperor wanted to protect them and their liberty. He encouraged them to make their complaints to the Bishop who, in turn, would see that the Emperor punished the guilty Spaniards.

At this request of their friend, the caciques told their story and as a result of the reports, Zumárraga began an inquest. This activity of the Bishop and his assistant Pedro de Gante, angered the first Audiencia and a controversy followed. The Audiencia had been sent from Spain to protect the natives as well as to stop the quarreling among the Spaniards, but everyone is aware that the infamous Guzmán, who was in charge, looked after his own interests and forget his duties to the Emperor.[9] The reports sent by the

5 Edward Armstrong, The Emperor Charles V, (2 vols. Macmillan & Co., Ltd., London, 1910), Second Edition, II, p.107.
6 Ibid.
7 Aiton, op.cit., p.33
8 Bancroft, History of Mexico, II, p.331.
9 Ibid., II, p.283.

friars to the home government were forcibly intercepted and Zumárraga could do nothing to help the natives.[10] He did finally succeed in getting a letter smuggled through to Charles V.

The letter written August 27, 1529 contained the following information.

> ...there came to me secretly to make their complaints, the Lords of Huejotcingo, who at the time were in encomienda to Don Hernando Cortés, and they said that they served Hernando Cortés as his mayordomos commanded and gave the tribute which was agreed upon, but that for some time the President and auditors had cast upon them another tribute in addition to this.[11]

The chief cause of the trouble between the Church and the Audiencia was the practice of the Audiencia of granting excessive license to brand and enslave the Indians.[12] The Audiencia resented the interference of Zumárraga.[13] It contended that the authority of Zumárraga as Protector of the Indians, was subordinate to it.[14] He was told by the auditors that if he interfered with their work he would be punished and they carried out their threat by refusing to give any means of support to the Bishop or his clergy. The order was in force for all of 1530. The Bishop retaliated in March 1530 by declaring the Audiencia excommunicated.[15]

When word reached Charles V of these conditions he appointed a second Audiencia to supersede the first and by a cédula of August 2, 1530 he prohibited slavery among the natives. Bishop Zumárraga was confirmed as protector of the Indians but his authority was to be subordinate to that of the

10 Bancroft, History of Mexico, II, p.283.
11 Arthur Helps, The Spanish Conquest in America (4 vols. John W. Parker and Son, London, 1857) III, p.182.
12 Aiton, op.cit., p.20.
13 Armstrong, op.cit., II, p.108; Helps, op.cit., III, p.84.
14 Bancroft, History of Mexico, II, p.283.
15 Armstrong, loc. cit.; Helps, op.cit.

Audiencia.[16] This second Audiencia had as one of the judges, Vasco de Quiroga who later became the beloved Bishop of Michoacan.

Meanwhile Gante continued his work. He taught the natives to love the faith and the Mass, and by his example he impressed upon them the necessity of prayer. He constructed a small cell close to the chapel of San José to which he retired daily, at certain hours, for prayer and meditation. Those periods of prayerful solitude strengthened him spiritually and enabled him to continue his work of spreading the kingdom of Christ.[17] One writer says that "the whole spiritual and religious government of the natives of Mexico and its surroundings depended principally on him,"[18] and another calls him a "star of the first magnitude in the ecclesiastical and civil history of New Spain."[19]

He was only a lay brother, but he felt it his duty to prepare the Mexicans for a worthy reception of all the sacraments. His neophytes were trained to prepare their people for Baptism; then, when he felt they were sufficiently instructed, Pedro administered the Sacrament. In his letter of 1529, mentioned above, he stated that "often we baptize in one day fourteen thousand Indians, other times ten thousand, and often eight thousand."[20] At first reading, one is inclined to think the numbers given are much too high but because of the many natives to be baptized and the few ministers to administer the sacrament, the friars had shortened the ceremonies.[21] Later on the validity of such Baptisms was questioned and:

> The friars being unable to settle the question submitted it to the supreme pontiff, who by bull of May 15, 1537, confirmed the baptisms so far

16 Bancroft, History of Mexico, II, p.331.
17 Mendieta, op. cit., p.609.
18 O'Gorman, op.cit., p.253.
19. Cuevas, op.cit., I, p.158.
20. Ibid., p.160.

> performed and authorized the friars thenceforth to apply the salt, saliva, candle, and cross to a few only of a group, though consecrated oil and water must be given to each person.[22]

The question of marriage caused the friars some concern in the years immediately following the Conquest of Tenochtitlán and in fact all through the era of the conquest to 1556. While the Indians of the lower and middle classes possessed but one wife, many of the wealthiest natives had several wives. The friars tried very hard to induce them to give up all but one spouse, but they were not very successful in their efforts.[23] Fray Pedro as always when a difficult situation arose offered a solution. He established special classes where those contemplating marriage could receive instruction on Christian Marriage.[24] He also organized confraternities and sodalities and interested the members in the care and beautification of the altars. He saw too that his spiritual children were well prepared for the reception of the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist.

When there was no priest present who could address them in their native tongue, Fray Pedro preached to the Indians. That, in itself, is not remarkable, but Pedro had a speech defect which caused him to stutter so that the Spaniards found it very hard to understand him whether he spoke in Spanish or in Mexican. But when he preached to the natives they had no difficulty in grasping the import of his messages.[25] Catholic Actionists of to-day who advocate the reading of the Breviary by lay people, might be interested to

21 (continued from p.70) Bancroft, History of Mexico, II, p.176.
22 Ibid
23 Mendieta, op.cit., p.609.
24 Bancroft, op.cit., II, p.177.
25 Mendieta, op.cit.

know that Fray Pedro taught the sons of the caciques of Mexico, Indians, to recite the divine office four centuries ago.

There were others who worked among the Indians, priests who preached and heard their confessions, but the natives loved Fray Pedro and placed him above all others in their esteem. They looked upon him as their "particular padre,"[26] and they went to him in all their troubles and needs. Because of the confidence the natives reposed in him, he exerted great influence in the city of Mexico, and as a result of his popularity was the victim of the jealousies of his fellow-workers. Upon one occasion, he left Mexico City and retired to Tlascala. One chronicler intimates that he went there "to get away from the contemplated injuries of those opposing him and the persecutions of saintly men."[27] Another says that he had been "ordered" to Tlascala.[28]

The Indians missed Fray Pedro and resented his absence. After a time they assembled a fleet of boats on Lake Tezcoco and drew them up in battle formation. When they found their beloved Apostle at Tlascala they formed the canoes into a triumphal procession and led him back across Lake Tezcoco to the capital where a great celebration was held in honor of his return.[29]

The greatest proof of Pedro's humility is manifested in his refusal to accept Holy Orders. On three different occasions he was given permission to be ordained. The first time at the request of his superiors and of Charles V, Pope Paul granted the permission. In 1541, at a general chapter of the order held in Rome, when the assembly heard of Pedro's accomplishments it was

26 Ibid. Mendieta, loc. cit.
27 Annales Minorum, XX, p.421.
28 Mendieta, op.cit., p.610.
29 Ibid.

decided that such a man should not remain a lay brother, and the general of the order, Father Vicente Lunel offered him the privilege of receiving Holy Orders. In 1548 the Apostolic Nuncio to the Court of Charles V again conceded the honor to Fray Pedro.[30] But this holy servant of God despised all this attention and felt if he accepted the honor he would be yielding to vanity. He preferred to continue in his first vocation, that of a lay brother.[31] We of to-day, anxious as we are for all the praise and esteem men can heap upon us, cannot understand Pedro's attitude and as we attempt to explain his refusal, we miss entirely his point of view. We do not seem to realize that the motive which promted the missionaries to come to this unknown wilderness was not to obtain personal honor, but God's honor and glory.

In his youth, Pedro had held important positions at the Courts of Philip the Fair and Charles V and had had a taste of wordly honors. When he decided to leave the world, he entered the Franciscan Order as a lay brother although his education and social position would have entitled him to hold important ecclesiastical positions. Evidently when he entered the religious life he decided to turn his back upon temporal glory and devote his time entirely to God. He seemed to be convinced that he could best serve God as a lay brother and having made his choice, worldly honors could not tempt him to change. That he was tempted, history bears proof.

When the See of Mexico was created in 1525, Charles V offered it to Pedro and when he refused to consider it, Juan Zumárraga was selected as

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30. Mendieta, loc. cit.
31. Ibid.

bishop.[32] The diocese of Mexico was made an archdiocese by a Papal Bull of July 8, 1547 and Bishop Zumárraga was designated as the first archbishop. However, nine days after he received the documents confirming his appointment June 3, 1548, he died. The see was again offered to Pedro and again he refused.[33]

He is often referred to as Father Gante or Padre Gante but there seems to be no justification for this title.[34] If it were used only by non-catholic writers we might infer that they translated fray as father instead of friar, but members of his own order have spoken of him as Father Gante,[35] although his contemporaries state he was a lay-brother at the time of his death.[36]

A successor to Zumárraga was not selected immediately so Pedro had to be the unofficial protector of the Natives. In 1552 he wrote to the king beseeching him to show the Indians some mercy. In the letter, Pedro pointed out that the work which Spaniards demanded from the Mexicans was so excessive that their numbers were being rapidly decreased, and that they could not advance morally or otherwise if something was not done to check the Spaniards. The king listened to Pedro's plea and issued orders for the benefit of the Indians and several repugnant decrees of the viceroy and Audencia were repealed by command of Charles V.[37]

32 Bancroft, History of Mexico, II, p.297. (The terms of the Patronato Real gave Charles the right to nominate bishops.)
33 Ibid., p.559.
34 Ibid., On p.175 and p.559 Bancroft speaks of "Father Gante."
35. Engelhardt, Catholic Encyclopedia, VI, p.299; Steck, The First Half-Century of Spanish Dominion in Mexico, p.31. While Father Steck is quoting Chérez when he mentions Pedro as Father Gante, he makes no comment on the use of the term "Father" leaving one to assume that Pedro was a priest. In a later article, "A Great Schoolmaster in Early Mexico," in The Franciscan, VOL. XVII (Paterson, New Jersey, 1937) pp.20-22, Father Steck terms him Brother Peter.
36 Mendieta, op.cit., p.611.
37. Bancroft, op.cit., II, pp.572-573.

In June 1551, Fray Alonso de Montúfar was selected to succeed Zumárraga. He was consecrated in 1553 and arrived in Mexico in 1554.[38] His position was not an enviable one for at the time there was not complete accord between the civil and ecclesiastical authorities. Montúfar realised the difficulty of his position and was wise enough to seek the advice of men of sound judgment. One of the persons in whom he reposed great confidence and upon whom he called when in need of counsel was Fray Pedro. Montúfar often said that it was the Franciscan lay brother Pedro de Gante and not he who was archbishop of Mexico.[39] This is further proof of Gante's ability and influence, for Montúfar was a Dominican and it is not likely that he would have selected a Franciscan lay brother as one of his chief advisers if the man was not a power to be considered in the community.

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38 Bancroft, History of Mexico, II, p.663.
39 Mendieta, op.cit., p.609.

CHAPTER IX

EVALUATION

What Archbishop would not envy Pedro's record of accomplishments? There is scarcely a work of mercy one could name that Fray Pedro did not sponsor in Mexico. He founded an orphanage, a hospital, the schools mentioned and built over a hundred Churches and Chapels. Perhaps the most beautiful one was the Chapel of San Jose, which was erected in the royal garden of the Montezuma. It was Pedro's special pride and he enriched it with vestments, and candelabra, and beautified its furnishings whenever he could. It was the first Indian parish in New Spain and was well endowed by Philip II with the privileges of a Cathedral Church. The first Mexican Council, as well as the first convocation of the Sacred Inquisition was held within its walls.[1]

The fact that the civil government held meetings in the chapel illustrates how the Church and State worked together in New Spain. The representatives of the Spanish government in Mexico realized that the firm base upon which their government was established in the new world was due in no small measure to the work of the missionaries. The viceroys encouraged these untiring workers to found schools and colleges. In the early days all education was in the hands of the Church for the clergy were the only people capable of teaching. Even had the laymen in the colony been sufficiently educated to teach the natives, the public revenues were insufficient to provide free public schools.[2]

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1. Annales Minorum, XX, p.422
2. Vallette, op.cit., p.638.

The Spaniards brought all of their Spanish institutions with them to New Spain. The friars came with the conquistadores for all Spaniards felt it their duty to bring the Faith to the aborigines. To them, introducing Spanish rule in a conquered territory meant paving the way for the introduction of the Catholic Religion.[3] The Church organization was under the authority of the king and was an effective agency in sustaining his rule in distant colonies.[4] When we are tempted to criticise Spain's methods of managing her colonies we should remember that the institutions which she introduced lasted for over three centuries and her plan of colonization was more finished and more successful than any followed by other colonizing nations.[5]

Church and crown were both interested in education and it was undertaken on a large scale in the Spanish possessions.[6] The missionaries were concerned primarily with religious instruction but secular learning was included in their schools. Many of the bishops founded schools in their dioceses in addition to the ones which were always erected beside the convents of the regular clergy.[7]

The Spanish institutions, social, political, educational and ecclesiastical, came almost at the beginning of the Spanish settlements. While the Conquest was going on, the public school, the university and the printing press were functioning in Spanish territory.[8] Undoubtedly the first printing

3. Rev. Edwin Ryan,D.D. "Diocesan Organization in the Spanish Colonies." in The Catholic Historical Review. II, (July 1916) pp.146-156, p.147.
4. Bourne, op.cit., p.302.
5. Charles H. Cunningham, "The Institutional Background of Spanish American History," in The Hispanic American Historical Review, I (1918) pp.24-39, p.25.
6. Bourne, op. cit., p.308.
7. Pierre J. Marique, History of Christian Education (2 vols. New York, 1926) II, p.153.
8. John J. O'Shea, "Spain's Legacy to Mexico," in American Catholic Historical

press in the New World was a very primitive one, but it was put to very good use. Before any English colonies were established in North America one hundred and sixteen different works had been issued in Mexico. There were only fourteen years out of the last sixty-one of the sixteenth century when no book was printed and in some years as many as six were published.[9] The dictionaries and grammars of the native languages and the histories of the Mexican institutions which were written at that time are proof of the intellectual activity of the period.[10]

Some writers who are willing to admit that the Spaniards did have a few schools in Mexico feel they are not worthy of more than passing mention because they were established to teach Catechism and did nothing in the field of science. Bourne in discussing that question says:

> That the Spanish authorities inChurch and state did much to promote education is abundantly evident and the modern sciences of anthropology, linguistics, geography, and history are profoundly indebted to the labors of early Spanish-American scholars and missionaries. It is in these fields that their achievements shine, for in these fields they could work unhampered by the censorship of the press and the Inquisition.[11]

There were books in almost every department of science and theology printed in Mexico during the sixteenth century, and we assume they found readers, for it is not likely they would have been printed otherwise.[12]

8 (cont. from p.77) Review, XXIV (1899) pp.91-106.
9 Engelhardt, "The Earliest Books in the New World," p.12.
10 Bourne, op.cit., p.310.
11 Ibid., pp.311-312.
12 Engelhardt, The Earliest Books in the New World," p.12.

Many of the works accomplished by the missionaries were the ideas of that great missionary, Fray Pedro. He well deserves the title of Father of Education in Mexico and he certainly was the Apostle of the Indians. His capable, efficient management and personal supervision of the institutions which he founded had much to do with their success. At a time when petty jealousies and personal ambitions were rampant among the Spaniards, Fray Pedro was able to forget self and as a result obtained the cooperation of the authorities and the love and respect of the Indians. His very selflessness endeared him to all.

The services which Pedro rendered as a social worker are just as outstanding as his work in education. He was aware of the many abuses which came in the wake of the Conquest and he went about remedying them as best he could. He received no pay andless glory for all he did, but he possessed in a marked degree that virtue which most of us shun and few can appreciate - Humility - and he expected no recognition. He had consecrated his life to the service of God and asked nothing but an opportunity to work for Him. Apparently that was all he received from the Spaniards and from historians.

He is, however, remembered kindly by the city for whose culture he laid the foundation. The people of Mexico take Pedro for granted. The traveller is presumed to know about him and his work, an account of which is handed down from generation to generation. Even in these troublesome times when churchmen are persecuted by the government and Mexican officialdom is bent upon removing all vestiges of the Faith that Gante once planted, his name is held in veneration. The site of his establishments is pointedout and the story of his deeds is recounted to the tourist as he walks along the way

once trod by Brother Pedro and now named in his honor. The influence for good which he exerted upon the aborigines still has an effect upon their descendants, even after four centuries have elapsed. Just how much of the intelligence and refinement of the inhabitants of to-day is traceable to the indefatigable efforts of their beloved Flemish friar no one can estimate.[13]

Fray Pedro must, at times, have been discouraged with the little encouragement he received, for his biographer mentions how hard he prayed for the grace to overcome the temptation to return to his native Flanders.[14] But the spirit of the missionary was strong in him and he had the moral courage to conquer what he deemed a selfish inclination. He wrote many letters to the fathers of the province of Flanders urging them to journey to New Spain, where, he said, lay the happiest field for the gospel and where the regions were already white for the harvest.

After nearly fifty years spent in and around Mexico City Pedro de Gante was called to his eternal reward on June 29, 1572. Although he received very little attention during his life time, all of Mexico honored him in death. Both the Indians and the Spaniards from the surrounding towns gathered in crowds at the monastery to honor his memory. The clergy as well as the lowly Indians were present at his funeral. The natives were deeply moved by his faith and in addition to attending the funeral services many of them dressed in mourning clothes as they would for their own fathers. The Indians asked the prelates of the order for permission to bury the body of their beloved Pedro in the Chapel of San Jose and this permission was granted.

13. Thomas Terry, Guide to Mexico (Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1927) p.324.
14. Mendieta, op.cit., p.610.

They observed the anniversary of his death with great solemnity and his memory was kept in veneration by them.[15]

The Spaniards made little effort to preserve his memory. To-day the plot of ground where Fray Pedro was buried is in part the property of American Protestants, having been confiscated by the government during the Juarez regime. In spite of the neglect of his contemporaries his name has endured and he may yet receive his rightful place in history as the Father of Education in North America.

The following quotations express the ideas of a few writers concerning Fray Pedro. Fray Alonso de Escalona, a contemporary of Pedro wrote to Philip II:

> We have lost in Fray Pedro de Gante one of the best workers. God took him to Himself to reward him as He does with His servants and it would be hard to tell you how much he worked in this land. He was an unwearied pastor, working for his sheep for fifty years, dying among them, very different from that bishop Las Casas who abandoned them and died far away from them. The Indians ought to be very grateful to him and we ourselves the religious, since he was encouraged by the fact of being a relative so close to the most Christian father of your Majesty who by him helped us so much.[16]

Bancroft says:

> Pedro de Gante remained a power at the episcopal court owing to his great experience, ability and influence, as Archbishop Montúfar admits, and this till his death on June 27, 1572. He was interred in the chapel of St. Joseph, one of the many temples built by himself, and there round his grave concentrated all the vast love he had won from the Spaniards as well as natives, by his apostolic zeal, his benevolence and his self-denying life.[17]

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15. Mendieta, op.cit., pp.610-611.
16. Cuevas, op.cit., I, p.159.
17. Bancroft, History of Mexico, II, p.559.

Spell feels he is not entirely forgotten for:

> The only completely equipped music school in America which opens its doors to all alike - tuition free - is the National Conservatory of Music in Mexico and this is a fitting monument to Pedro de Gante, the first teacher of European music in America.[18]

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18. Spell, op.cit.,p.378.

APPENDIX

The appended biographies are translations from the Spanish as recorded in Historia Eclesiastica Indiana Obra Escrita á Fines Del Siglo XVI. Por Fray Gerónimo de Mendieta, O.F.M. La publica por primera vez Joaquín García Icazbalceta (Mexico, 1870) and from the Latin Annales Minorum seu Trium Ordinum A.S. Francisco Institutorum Tomus XX (ad Clara Aquas Quaracchi Prope Florentian, 1933). There is a copy of Historia Eclesiastica Indiana at the Newberry Library and the Annales Minorum may be consulted at Cudahy Memorial Library.

APPENDIX I

Ecclesiastical History of the Indies Book V pp.607-611

Chapter XVIII

The Life of Fray Pedro de Gante, One of the First Three.

The steward of God, Fray Pedro de Gante was born inthe Flemish city or village of Iguen, of the province of Budarda, who in order to flee from the dangers of the world and the pleasures of the flesh, with which the devil allures the young people when the blood begins to burn, imposed upon his neck the yoke of the Lord, being yet a young lad receiving the habit of the Franciscan order. And although he was bright enough to be of the choir, he didn't want to, but only a lay brother, for his humility was great. In which choice he proved to be a man of great charity and profound christianity. Living in the convent of Ghent and hearing the news spread over the world that a new land that of New Spain, peopled by a barbarous and idolatrous people, had just been conquered by Hernando Cortés, he was deeply moved by the spirit of God and the salvation of the souls, and he came to this land, accompanied by his very guardian, Fray Juan de Tecto, and another religious man, as I told above. Fray Pedro de Gante was very bright in every kind of arts and offices useful to the human and christian policy. And so it seems that our Lord furnished him at the beginning of the conversion of these Indians, much needed hlep that he could lead them and teach them not only in the spiritual things of the salvation of their souls, but also in the temporal ones of human industry, which open the eyes of understanding of rude people that they mat get into the beings of the spirit, as the apostle says: Prius quod animale, deinde quod spirituale. He was the

first in this New Spain to teach how to read and write, to sing and play the musical instruments, and the Christian Doctrine, first in Tezcoco to some sons of the principals, before the coming of the twelve, and afterward in Mexico where he resided for almost all his life with the exception of a short time he lived in Tlascala.

In Mexico he had the sumptuous Chapel of St. Joseph built behind the poor and small early (first) church of St. Francis where the Indians gathered to listen to the word of God and attend the divine services, and get themselves instructed in the Christian doctrine, every Sunday and feast receiving the holy sacrament. He also had the school of the children built where at the beginning the sons of the lords of the land got their instruction, and now thoseof the very city of Mexico. And close to the school he had built other apartments or distribution of houses where to teach everybody in the whole country. He had others taught in the mechanical offices, whereby the Indians got instructed inthem. Fray Pedro had a cell close to the school where to retire for a while during the day, and there he devoted himself to prayer and reading and other spiritual exercises and at times he went out to see what the Indians were doing. His main care was that the children became instructed as well in the Christian doctrine as in reading and writing, signing and in the other things he drilled them in. Therefore he took care that the adults might give an account of the Christian doctrine and might gather every Sunday to hear Mass and listen to the word of God. He examined carefully those who were to get married and got ready those who had to make confession and receive the Holy Eucharist. He preached when there was no priest who could preach in the Indian language, in which

he was a master, although he was a stutterer, so as scarcely to be understood by the friars neither in the Mexican language by those who knew it, nor in our own. But it was a marvelous thing that the Indians understood him in their language as if he were one of them. He composed init (Indian language) a doctrine (catechism) which now goes around printed very copious andlong. He instituted for them two confraternities they have now, and he always tried to increase the splendor of the divine services, getting many and good singers and players as well as vestments for the worship in the chapel of St. Joseph, and biers, crosses, and candlesticks for the processions, so many that I don't think there are as many in any other city of Christendom.

He built many churches in the city of Mexico as well as in the villages of the environs. In this work and the like was this servant of God occupied for fifty years that he lived in this land edifying everybody with the honesty of his person and his apostolic liberty, without seeking any other interest but the glory and honor of God and the edification of the souls whereby he won for Christ a big number of them. On account of this he was very beloved, as one could see throughout his life, for being just a lay brother, and there being other priests who preached and heard the confessions of the Indians, and they too great servants of God and prelates of the Order, only Fray Pedro was recognized as their particular padre, and to him they did apply in their troubles and needs; and so on him mainly depended the rule of the natives of the city of Mexico and the environs in the spiritual things as well as in the ecclesiastical; so much so, that the second Archbishop Fray Alonso de Montúfar, of the order of preachers, used

to say: "I am not the Archbishop of Mexico, but Pedro de Gante, lay brother of the Franciscan Order is." And truly Fray Pedro would have been if he wished to become a priest, for the Emperor Charles V, of glorious memory, as he was of his countryland and knew perfectly his person and life, appreciated him very much and (they say) offered him to appoint him Archbishop of Mexico. He showed a tender and singular love for the Indian natives of this land, taking care that they might have sufficient doctrine, and in order that they might have sufficient doctrine, he wrote some letters to the Flemish religious (men of his own country), exhorting them to come to this new land to work in the vineyard of the Lord, which at that time was in lack of workers. The natives in return, loved very much this servant of God, especially those of Mexico, as they showed very clearly when he came back from Tlascala (where by obedience he had lived for a short time) to Mexico, for they came out to meet him in the big Lake of Tezcoco with a beautiful fleet of canoes making for him a big festival that resembled a naval war, with great rejoicing.

An Indian Mexican woman used by devotion to furnish the clothes for several friars, and as she wanted on time to put it into practice, she went to talk about it with a religious whose name was Fray Melchior de Benavente, who by that time was in charge of the Indians in the Chapel of St. Joseph, and she said to him: "Padre, I want to dress (furnish the clothes for) five religious, and you with them, that is six altogether," and she started to name by their own names, and among them she mentioned the servant of God, Fray Pedro de Gante, who was dead already. To which Fray Melchior de Venavente answered: "Daughter, don't you know that Fray Pedro de Gante passed

away and is among the dead?" She replied: - "Father, I give as an offering a habit to Fray Pedro de Gante; give it to whom you please." So much did the natives love this servant of God, even after his death. Much worked Fray Pedro de Gante in this vineyard of the Lord especially at the beginning breaking to pieces many idols and destroying their temples. He built more than one hundred churches were to invoke the name of the true God. He was much tempted by the devil to return to Flanders and leave a great enterprise, but with the help of God he overcame the temptation and the snare was broken, and the servant of God, free, as he confessed in a letter addressed to the Fathers of Flanders.

He was a man of great humility as he proved to be by not accepting the permission (license) for three times to become a priest. First from Pope Paul III, second from the general chapter held in Rome by the general of the order Father Vicento Lunel, for as the Fathers that met there heard of his fame it seemed to them that such a man should not be a lay brother. Third from an apostolic Nuncio that was in the court with Charles V and most probably, it was suggested by the very Caesar, for as we said before, he even wanted him to be archbishop. But all this despised the servant of God as nothing but vanity, wishing only to gain Jesus Christ, preferring to stay as a lay brother, his first vocation. He died in 1572, at whose death the natives were deeply affected with sorrow and sadness, as they showed not only by attending his funeral in a big crowd but also by dressing in mourning clothes for him as for a true father. And after celebrating very solemn funerals all together, every archconfraternity did the same in particular, and every village and town of the land and many of the persons with big and

copious offerings and they celebrated, too, the anniversary with great solemnity. It was so much what they offered for the servant of God, Fray Pedro, that that year they furnished the convent of St. Francis of Mexico with food, furniture and clothes. The natives asked the prelates of the order for the body of the servant of God in order to bury him in the beautiful chapel of St. Joseph. They granted, and they keep it to-day with great veneration. And they painted his (picture) painting and almost every village of the country did the same (painted his picture) together with the first twelve of the province of the Holy Gospel (San Evangelo).

APPENDIX II

The following pages are a translation of the life of Pedro de Gante as it appears in the Annales Minorum, Tomus XX pp.420-422.

Pedro de Gandava, or de Mura, or as Torquemada wrote, de Villa Yguen, completed his evangelical studies. He set out for America in 1529 according to Gonzaga, and according to Augustine de Vetancur in 1523, which seems to be more correct; for Pope Adrian VI'S letter, "Expone nobis" to Charles V, as well as the letter of Paul de Soncino, the ministerGeneral, "Quum Sacra Imperialis" for sending Franciscans into the West Indies, were dispatched on May 19th and May 30th respectively, in the year 1522. The outcome of these letters was that Charles the fifth ordered three men from the monastery of Bruges in the province of Flanders to make the journey; the first, Peter de Gandavo a layman, John de Tectis, professor of theology at Paris, and John de Aora, whom Augustine de Vetancur calls Confessor of the king of Scotland. These three men with Ferdinand Cortés made a voyage to Mexico shortly after Columbus, with the hope of accomplishing spiritual victories in America.

There is little of note handed down in the letters of John Tectis, other than the fact of having merited much in spiritual matters, he passed to his reward in a place known as de las Higueras near the harbor where Cortés had disembarked into the province of Honduras. So also there is very little known to-day of John de Aora other than the fact that he died in Tezcoco while engaged in the work of converting the infidels. Concerning these three saintly men, most of the records deal with Peter de Gandava's life. Peter remained a short time longer in the neighborhood of Tezcoco, then crossed over to Mexico. There he spent the rest of his life, an instrument of Almighty

God among the natives; he was the first of all missionaries to teach the Indians the alphabet, and the arts of painting and music. Peter was a man of great talent and capable of teaching such things. Thus, God willing, it so happened that in the study of human arts, the Indians were led to understand those things which were spiritual.

Peter had more than four hundred boys trained at home in questions of religious nature; for the most part these were sons of wealthy men and leaders, who in turn instructed their parents. They were taught how to say the divine office after the manner of Clerics in the choir and how to teach the catechism. From their ranks Peter selected fifty boys of remarkable talents, whom he sent to preach the word of God, since there were but a few engaged in such labor. During the week he explained to them what they should teach the people on Sunday. Then they set out to produce a great harvest of souls, and God granted much power to the zealous youths.

Peter founded the church of St. Joseph at Mexico City in the royal gardens of the Montezuma, behind the small, humble churchof the Franciscans, where the Indians would gather for sermons and services on Feast days. He built a college and some houses nearby where other boys learned the art of painting and carving images of the saints. Under his direction others learned the art of using cement, wood and iron for the uplift of society. Near the college he built a separate abode for himself, into which he would often retire for prayer and reading. From this period of solitude he returned stronger in mind and body, more zealous than ever to spread the kingdom of Christ. The boys looked upon him as a parent and served him at every beckon. Whatever he requested or commanded they did with utmost speed. It is noteworthy, that although he had a defect of speech which made

it hard for his brothers to understand him, yet the Indians clearly understood his words. As often as a priest was wanting who was skilled in the Mexican idiom, Peter would preach to the people and thus prepare them for the reception of the sacraments. Previous to this time Christian doctrine was spread by paintings, but Peter wrote much in the Mexican idiom.

Having overturned the shrines of the idols he dedicated to God in the territory of Mexico alone more than one hundred churches among which the four principal ones were St. John Baptist of Moyotta, St. Paul of Teopon, or of Xochimilca, St. Sebastian of Atzoqualco and the Assumption of Our Lady of Tloquechiuchum. He instituted pious sodalities, enriched the elegance of the altars, especially of the small church of St. Joseph with vestments, candelabra, vases and in every manner beautified the furnishings which is the first among the parishes of the Indians and older than the nearly 63,000 churches of New Spain and Peru and well endowed by King Philip II with the privileges of a Cathedral Church. In it was held the first general Mexican Council, there being present the senate of the city, all the magistrates, the knights and caciques of the kingdom and an ovation being delivered in praise of the Emperor Charles V. In it also the tribunal of the Sacred Inquisition exercised its first act. To this parish pertained the Indians and churches about which we shall speak.

But although Peter was illustrious for such distinguished endowments, yet he especially shone with humility; for admonished by the Supreme Pontiff Paul III, by Vincent Lunello, the Minister-General and by the papal nuncio in the home of the Catholic king, that ht receive the priesthood, he could never be persuaded to do it, although the Emperor wished to declare him Archbishop of Mexico; whence it happened that he conferred that dignity on